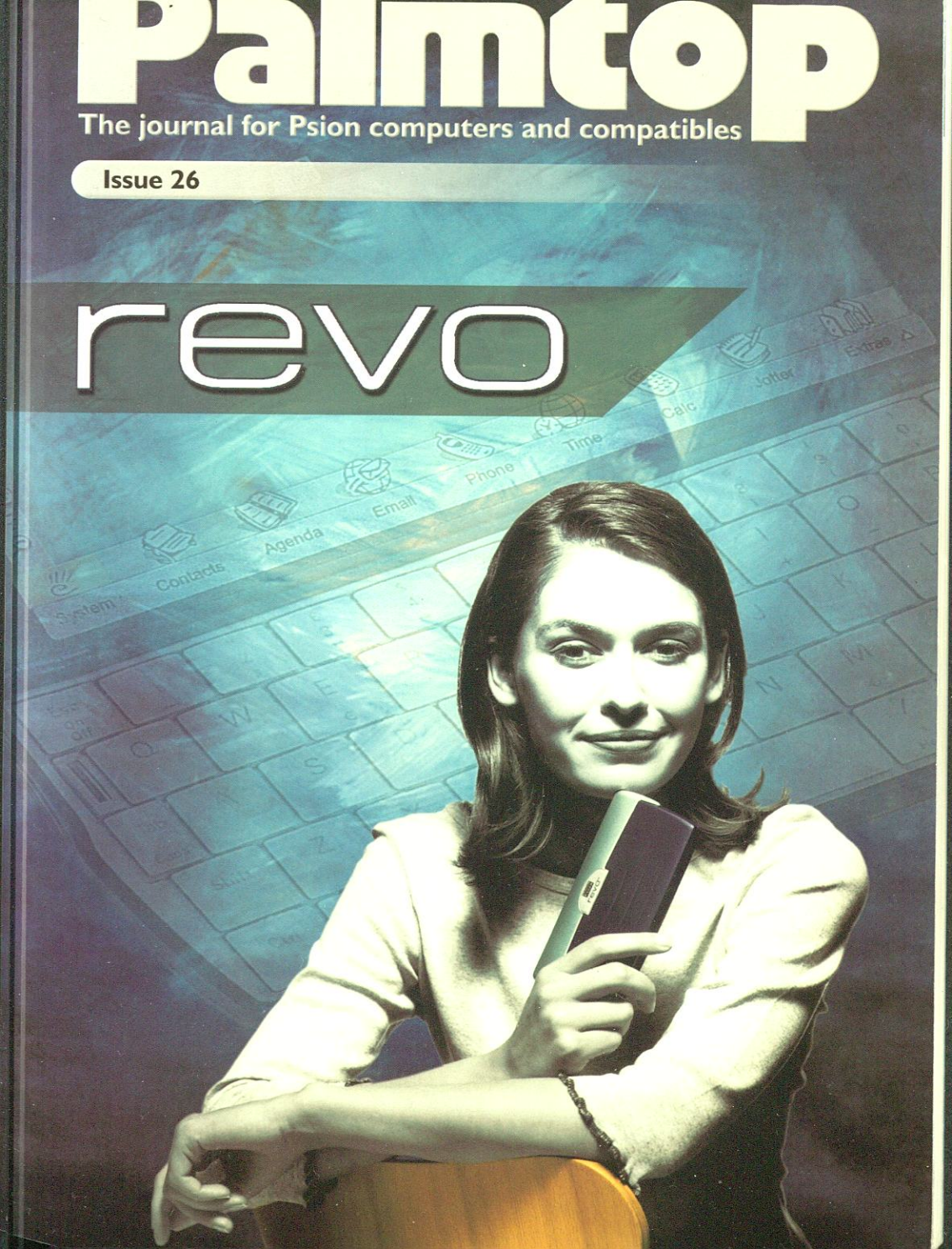
Palmtop

The journal for Psion computers and compatibles

Issue 26

revo



SERIES 7 now available!

CLOVE TECHNOLOGY

- Competitive pricing on Series 7
- Pegasus modem now available
- LOWER price on Series 5mx
- LOWER price on Siemens Pocket Reader
- Great range of CompactFlash disks
- CALL for our new newsletter!

Competitive Prices

Quick and Friendly Service

Next Day Delivery

Established over 7 Years

HITS PC Direct Awards '99

WINNER
Clove Technology
Subnotebooks/Palmtops

Specialist PSION Dealer

☎01202 302796
Fax 01202 300419
www - http://www.clove-tech.co.uk
43 Springbank Road, Bournemouth BH7 7EL
Email: clovetech@compuserve.com

Palmtop

The journal for Psion computers and compatibles

Contacting Palmtop

Any comments or suggestions regarding the content of *Palmtop* should be directed to the editor at the following address:

Palmtop Publications
PO Box 188
BICESTER
Oxfordshire
OX6 0GP
ENGLAND

Tel: +44 (0)1869 249287
Fax: +44 (0)1869 246043

Email (general): info@palmtop.co.uk
or (to contact the editor): editor@palmtop.co.uk
World Wide Web: www.palmtop.co.uk

Submissions

Any contributions of material published within the pages of *Palmtop* (excluding 'On The Net' and Q&A) will earn the author a minimum of one free issue added to their subscription. If you wish to write feature articles for the magazine then please contact the publishing editor to discuss your ideas.

Back issues

Back issues are available at £4 each in the UK, £4.50 in Europe and £5.50 elsewhere (while stocks last). All prices include postage. Just send payment in the usual way, stating which issues you require.

Subscriptions

Palmtop is available by subscription only from the address given above, price £24 within the UK, £27 in Europe and £33 worldwide. Price covers 6 issues and all postage (and airmail costs for European/ worldwide subscriptions). VAT is not payable on *Palmtop*.

Payment for subscriptions or back issues can be made by cheque or Money Order (payable to 'PALMTOP PUBLICATIONS') in UK FUNDS ONLY. Payments can also be made using VISA, MASTERCARD, AMERICAN EXPRESS, EUROCARD, DELTA, JCB, ACCESS, SOLO and SWITCH cards. Please call, fax, post or email your card details, or use the secure online ordering system from our web site.

General

©Palmtop Publications 1994-1999. All rights reserved. No material may be reproduced in whole or in part without written consent from the copyright holder.

Palmtop Publications acknowledges that some of the names referred to within the magazine are registered trademarks and are given for information purposes only, with no commercial interests. All trademarks remain the property of their respective companies.

Views and opinions of contributors do not necessarily coincide with those of Palmtop Publications.

Contents

Issue 26
(Volume 5, issue 2)

Features

Starting up: Backups All you need to know 44
Adding to Agenda A roundup of add-ons for all Psion/EPOC palmtops ... 51
Living with the Ericsson MC218 A long term appraisal 57
Living with the Oregon Osaris Another extended report 63
Java! The second instalment of our three part introduction 67
Advanced Spreadsheet Techniques Lots of logic 73
The Apple Connection Connecting your Psion to a Mac 77
Working with Contacts Getting to grips with this new application 91

Regulars

Editorial Have Psion gone too far? 3
Newsreel What's going on in the Psion/EPOC world 4
Industry News What's happening in the non-EPOC sector 11
Shareware Shorts Highlights from the shareware world 12
MailBox Opinions, anyone? 20
A Closer Look The latest products under scrutiny 22
THREE for all For Series 3 users only 83
Competition Win an *80MB* CompactFlash or 4MB SSD! 86
A beginner's guide to programming your Psion Part 5 ... 87
On The Net Pete Sipple's Internet roundup 96
Hints & Tips Get the most from your Psion 98
Q&A Your questions answered 100
Musings Out with the old, in with the new 104

Editorial

The quality of Psion's technical support service has been a thorny subject for some time now, and something I touched on in last issue's editorial.

So how do Psion fix the problem? As you'll see from our very first news item on the following page, they've decided to charge by the minute for support. *£1* per minute, to be precise.

If you've recently purchased a Psion computer and are expecting a 'grace' period of free support (as is common in the industry) then think again—the £1 per minute starts from day one. If you're anticipating a long conversation then you can always pay 'per incident', but that's £14 per call.

This is getting absurd. You pay almost 2p for every *second* you're on the phone, to somebody who doesn't even guarantee to fix your problem—conceivably for a computer you paid £400 for only a few days ago.

Charging for technical support is nothing new, but charges of around half of this are more common (in the UK, at least), and a minimum of 90 days initial free support are *de rigeur*.

Then comes the issue of quality. We can assume that Psion's thinking goes something like: "If we charge a high premium rate for support, it'll stop people clogging up the phone lines with stuff they can just as easily look up in the manual, and with all this extra revenue we can pay for more (better?) staff".

If everyone now gets their calls answered promptly and their questions answered, maybe some will live with these onerous charges. However good the service turns out to be, most users will never find out. Not because they don't need the support, but because they refuse to pay such high rates.

Do Psion really think all those thousands of disgruntled users will buy a Psion next time around? No matter how great their computers may be to use, Psion *have* to improve their perceived attitude towards customers, and as part of that 'improvement' this latest move simply beggars belief.

Steve Clack - December 1999

Palmtop is...

Steve Clack - Publishing Editor

Rosemary Rolfe - Distribution Manager

Christian Hayle - Artwork / Subscriptions

Steve Litchfield - Editor

Pete Sipple - Contributing Editor

Leigh Edwards - Technical Consultant

John Woodthorpe - Senior Contributor

Nigel Wright - Senior Contributor

Thanks... to all the other contributors whose names appear within the magazine. Thanks also to all those who have kindly supplied their products for evaluation.

Series 5 cartoons - Carl Reader

Printed by The Nuffield Press

Newsreel

What's new in the Psion and EPOC world...

Psion impose new technical support rates

As of 29th November, Psion have now switched to a fully chargeable technical support helpline in the UK. Note that this applies even to newly purchased machines, without any opportunity for free assistance. Note also that Psion state that the charges are for "Access to technical support, and we cannot guarantee a solution to your problem."

Three payment options are currently available:

- Call 0906 544 0000 for by-the-minute support, charged at *£1 per minute*.
- Call 0870 101 0700 for support on a 'Per incident' basis, charged at *£14 per call*.
- Call 0800 849 1444 for an annual subscription to their technical support service, at £34.95 for one year.

Revo released, 56k Travel Modem imminent

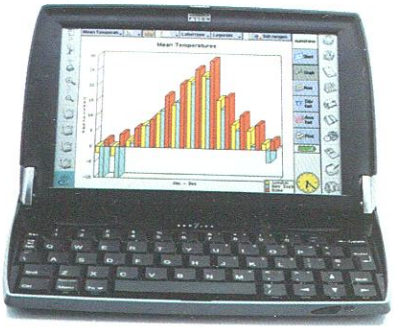
Psion Computers have successfully launched the Revo, their new pocket-sized organiser designed for people who also want email and Internet access capabilities. Revos have been available in quantity since the middle of October. See page 23 for our exhaustive review. The Revo has already collected the 'Best Hardware' award at this year's Comdex/Fall '99 computer trade fair in Las Vegas.

Announced at the same time was a new 56k infrared Travel Modem, from Psion Dacom. The modem is likely to be available sometime in January, and we'll be putting it through its paces in issue 27.

www.psion.com

Halting start for the Seven

Availability problems with the Series 7 have meant that significant numbers are only now reaching shops and dealers. The delay has given Psion a chance to increase the specification to include a 133MHz processor (rather than the 100MHz version we reviewed in issue 25). On the downside, production units are shipping with a screen that supports only 256 colours, rather than the 4096 of our earlier review sample.



Dead stop for the Series 3mx

After much speculation, Psion confirmed at the recent Revo launch that the Series 3mx has now been officially discontinued. You'll find more comment on the termination of the Series 3 range elsewhere in this issue.

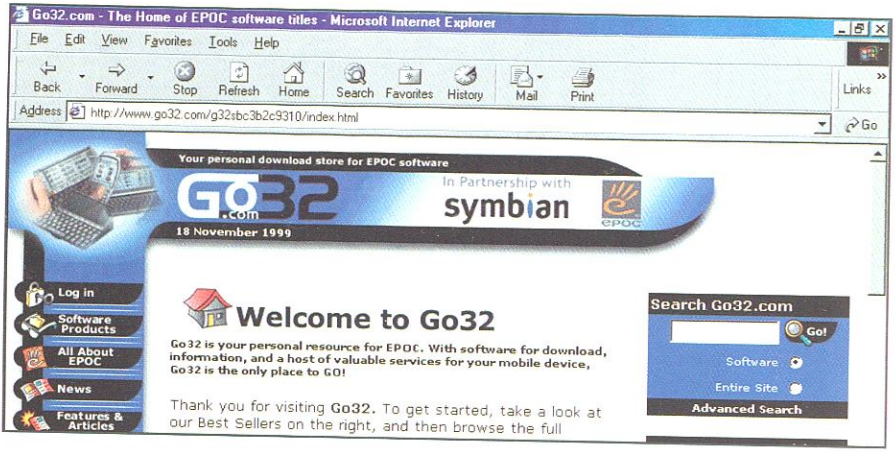
In the meantime, there are still a few units in the retail channel if you want to snap up an 'end-of-line' bargain. 3mx's have been spotted going for as little as £99.

Series 5mx Mobile Update

Psion has released version 1.1 of its Mobile Connectivity Update (605K file size), designed for Series 5mx users and available in English, French, German and Dutch. It fixes known issues with certain mobile phones:

- Motorola Timeport L7089 - general problems with SMS, and data calls.
- Siemens S25 - general IrDA and SMS problems.
- Sagem M8300/RD750 - general problems with SMS.
- Bosch GSM908/909 - general problems with SMS.

www.psion.com/downloads


Go32.com - The Home of EPOC software titles - Microsoft Internet Explorer
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Back Forward Stop Refresh Home Search Favorites History Mail Print
Address http://www.go32.com/g32sbc3b2c9310/index.html
Your personal download store for EPOC software
GO32 .com
18 November 1999
In Partnership with
symbian
EPOC
Log in
Software Products
All About EPOC
News
Features & Articles
Welcome to Go32
Go32 is your personal resource for EPOC. With software for download, information, and a host of valuable services for your mobile device, Go32 is the only place to GO!
Thank you for visiting Go32. To get started, take a look at our Best Sellers on the right, and then browse the full
Search Go32.com
Go!
Software
Entire Site
Advanced Search

Go32 is go!

Go32 is a new 'evolutionary' electronic download site that promises other facilities and services in response to user feedback. Conceived by NetMaster Communication, part of Purple Technologies, Go32 is partnered with Symbian and offers "Online shopping with a difference". Visitors to the web site can register to receive personalized information.

www.go32.com

Palmtop BV name change

Palmtop BV, well known to Psion and EPOC users, are finishing the process of establishing their international presence as 'Palmtop Software Ltd.' Please note that despite the similarity in name, Palmtop Software Ltd have no connection whatsoever with Palmtop magazine or Palmtop Publications.

www.palmtopsoftware.com

Movie action

Palmtop Software (see above) have announced a free downloadable upgrade to version 2.3 of their Halliwell's Film & Video Guide. This is suitable for both 1998 and 1999 versions and includes the following enhancements:

- Built-in hints and tips.
- Configurable toolbar.
- All menu options now available from all views.
- Actor-notes replaced by the more powerful movie-notes and seen flags in both views.
- 'Actor view' is faster.
- New 'Paste & Find' feature.
- Now also suitable for the Oregon Osaris.

Owners of the 1998 version should note that this patch will not upgrade movie data, just the application itself. Also announced is a cut-down demo version, with data only from 1990 to 1995.

www.palmtopsoftware.com

Hot tips for Route Planner

Palmtop Software have also published a Route Planner 'Tips' page, featuring a number of useful hints and ideas to make better use of the program, especially in terms of func-

tions and customisations that are buried deep within the program.

www.palmtop.nl/support/tips_route.html

FTP at last

After a two year wait, Psion Series 5 owners at last have the chance to upload web pages using the popular FTP protocol with not one, but two, new applications. Neuon have announced nFTP and RMR have released RMRFtp, both written entirely in C++, with a fully graphical interface. Features include bookmarks for storing settings for favourite FTP sites and a log window that stores all messages from the remote FTP server.

www.neuon.com
www.rmrsoft.com

Swapping files

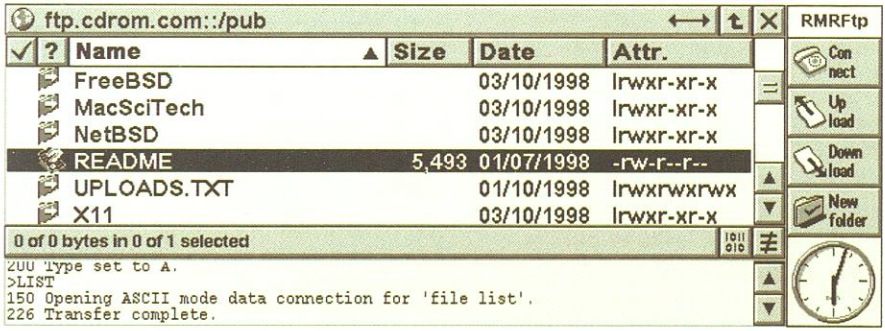
SoDeog Technologies have announced a new product that will enable disparate devices—EPOC, Palm and WindowsCE—to communicate easily and exchange information, using a common language. SyncTalk is software that enables wireless 'Hand 2 Hand' information exchange, running on WindowsCE, PalmOS and EPOC.

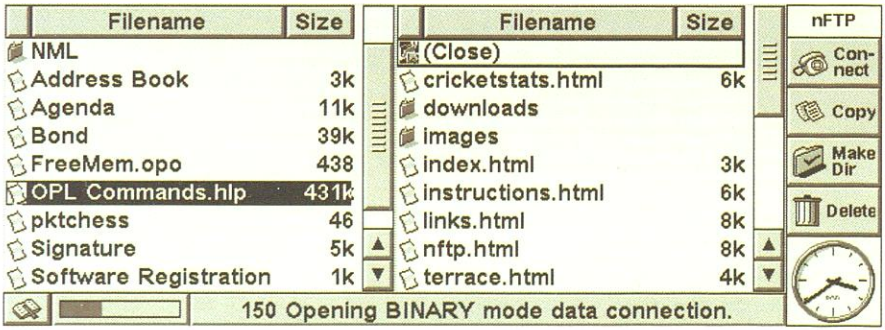
For example, SyncTalk will enable a PalmOS or WindowsCE user to send an appointment wirelessly from their device to a Psion palmtop.

www.sodeog.com/productinfo.htm

Revo cased

Palm-Tec, famous for their award-winning 'MBC' cases for the existing Psion palmtop





range, have announced the 'Shell', designed to protect the new Revo organiser. Like its larger cousin, the slim Shell will feature a rigid ABS plastic outer casing, impact absorbing foam lining and full in-situ use in the open 'desk stand' mode.

The Palm-Tec Shell will be available in the usual range of colours and finishes.

www.palmtec.com

PsiWin slammed

The Email Synchronisation module of Symbian's PsiWin technology has come under serious fire on the Mobile Ericsson site. Ericsson say "The current version of the Email Synchronisation application made available here on Ericsson Mobile Internet (EMI) has showed not to fulfil Ericsson's high product requirements... The current version can still be downloaded but is now to be seen as a beta version".

It remains to be seen how the commercial PsiWin 2.3 (and its EPOC Connect stablemates) evolves from here on. In issue 25 we made reference to the many people having problems with link reliability and synchronisation issues. We at *Palmtop* sincerely hope a mechanism can be found to make it freely available in future, along with regular updates and bug-fixes.

mobileinternet.ericsson.se/emi/default.asp

Symbian/Palm cross-license

Symbian and Palm Computing have agreed to discuss the cross-licensing of their respective technologies. The initiative aims to create a new 'pen-based Smart phones' product category, based on Symbian's technology but using the Palm user interface. More specifically, Symbian partner Nokia and Palm have announced a more detailed cooperative agreement, designed to create products next year which will run both PalmOS and EPOC applications (screen size permitting). Other technologies likely to be included in these products are WAP, Bluetooth and PalmOS's web clipping.

www.psion.com/aboutpsion/psion_welcome_palm_symbian.html

Acronym alert

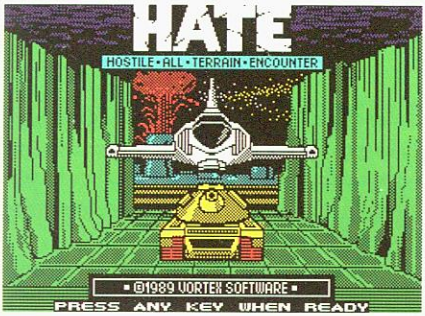
Symbian and fellow industry leaders IBM, Lotus, Oracle, Palm Computing and Ericsson are joining forces in the GPRS Applications Alliance (GAA), a cross-industry initiative designed to serve as a catalyst in the advancement of applications based on the new, high-speed mobile packet switching technology, GPRS (General Packet Radio Services).

www.gprsworld.com

Improved docking station

Pod Limited have improved their Docking Station (as reviewed in issue 23) for the Psion Series 5/5mx by including a combined power and communications cable, and is priced at £29.38 including VAT. See page 122 for availability.

Email: pod_ltd@csi.com



The emulator is capable of running all 4000 games developed for the Sinclair Spectrum—programs like PacMan, Lemmings, Elite, Star Glider, Donkey Kong, Psion Chess, LeMans Racing, Jet Set Willy, Manic Miner, Sabre Wulf, etc. and has been downloaded over 100,000 times from the Palmtop Software web site alone. We'll be covering the Spectrum emulator in more detail in the next issue.

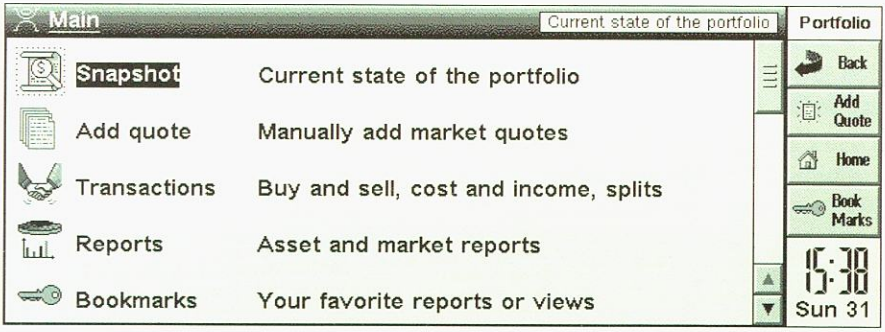
www.palmtop.nl/news.html

Colour Spectrum

Palmtop Software have released perhaps the ultimate Spectrum emulator. The new version 4.0 runs on all EPOC devices (Revo, 5/5mx, MC218, Series 7, Geofox and Osaris) and supports TrueColor, screen reduction (for the Revo) and better speed matching to the original Spectrum machines.

Portfolio Manager

Also newly released from Palmtop Software is Portfolio Manager, a comprehensive and easy to use fund management application. It offers an instant and accurate picture of all your investments and the performance of your portfolio. Key features include the management of shares, bonds, options, commodities and



currencies on different international exchanges, the setting of automatic warnings for user-definable conditions and the automatic feed of quotes from the Internet.

Portfolio Manager runs on all EPOC devices and is available for immediate download. We will be featuring a full review in issue 27.

www.palmtop.nl/portfoli.html

Web fix for 5mx

Psion has released an update to its Web application, primarily to fix problems with incorrect Series 5mx machine IDs (reported in issue 25), but suitable for every 5mx owner as it also improves Cookie support. Note that the update is not needed for the Revo or Series 7. This 930K download brings the application to version number 2.00 (49).

www.psion.com/downloads

No word on ER4-to-ER5 update

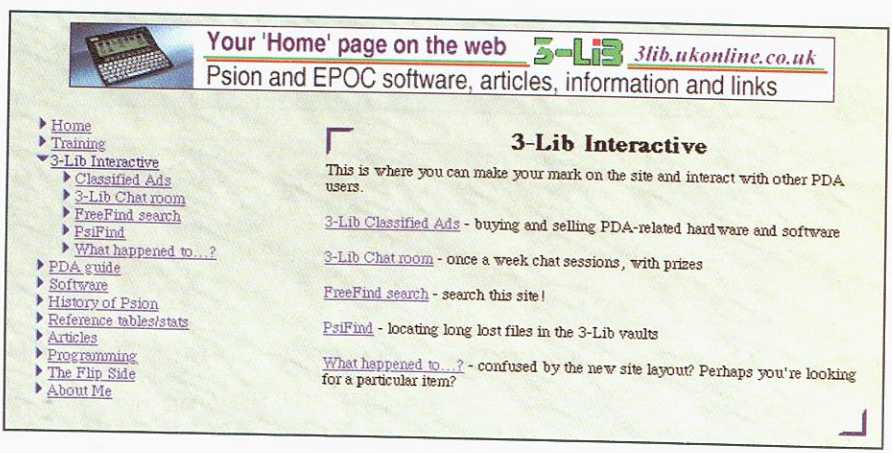
There's still no word from Psion on the rumoured EPOC Release 5 update program for owners of the Series 5 'classic'. After the non-appearance of the fabled ROM 1.1 update two years ago, this doesn't come as much of a surprise.

Talking to Psion staff at the launch of the 5mx revealed that such a project *did* exist and that it had an internal codename. Psion have since declined to comment.

3-Lib evolves

The 3-Lib library and web site have been relaunched and repositioned for the year 2000. The postal library has been largely unused in 1999 due to the rise of Internet availability to Psion users worldwide, and future compilations will be exclusively for *Palmtop* magazine's free CD. Individual CDs can still be obtained, by contacting Palmtop Publications directly, see page 111 for details.

The popular *3lib.ukonline.co.uk* web site has been overhauled and revamped. Out-of-date pages and directories have been removed, many others rewritten and updated and navigation through the site improved with a context-sensitive 'folder' side menu.


Your 'Home' page on the web
3-Lib
3lib.ukonline.co.uk
Psion and EPOC software, articles, information and links
Home
Training
3-Lib Interactive
Classified Ads
3-Lib Chat room
FreeFind search
PsiFind
What happened to...?
PDA guide
Software
History of Psion
Reference tables/stats
Articles
Programming
The Flip Side
About Me
3-Lib Interactive
This is where you can make your mark on the site and interact with other PDA users.
3-Lib Classified Ads - buying and selling PDA-related hardware and software
3-Lib Chat room - once a week chat sessions, with prizes
FreeFind search - search this site!
PsiFind - locating long lost files in the 3-Lib vaults
What happened to...? - confused by the new site layout? Perhaps you're looking for a particular item?

INDUSTRY NEWS

In this regular feature we devote a single page to what's happening in the non-EPOC sector of mobile computing...

IBM are one of the latest companies to provide hardware for the Windows CE market. The IBM WorkPad z650 Handheld PC Pro employs a 'TrackPoint' rather than a touch sensitive screen, and has a colour display, 16MB of RAM and a Type III PC card slot. A built-in 33.6k modem is also included as standard. The z650 is rather large to be termed a 'palmtop' computer and is also expensive, with a retail price in the region of $1000.

Fujitsu have also entered the Windows CE market, with the PenCentra 130. This expensive device has been developed specifically to target the requirements of mobile workers in fields such as healthcare and sales, and comes with 16MB RAM and two different 8 inch VGA colour displays. These have been developed for varying lighting conditions—a reflective display is included for use outdoors and a transmissive display for when the device is operated indoors.

Compaq have announced details of two new Palm-size PCs. The Aero 1520 is reputed to be the thinnest Palm-size PC using the Windows CE operating system and includes a monochrome non-glare display. Measuring only 0.5 inches thick, the device includes extra software and uses a rechargeable battery to deliver approximately 14 hours of use on one charge. Compaq have also upgraded their top-of-the-range 24MB Aero 2160 to include a high quality reflective TFT colour display and additional software.

3Com Palm Computing are, of course, the undisputed market leader in terms of units shipped around the world, with their Palm organiser range. 3Com Corporation has announced that it will soon be creating an independent, publicly traded company of its Palm Computing subsidiary. Also announced are the new 8MB Palm Vx organiser and the Palm VII wireless mobile, both of which have been rolled out across the United States. The VII is currently tied to the American mobile phone system and will not work outside the U.S.A.

3Com have also finally released a dedicated modem for use with the Palm V. The 33.6k Palm V modem is approximately the same size as the PDA itself and clips onto the back of the device.

HandSpring, the startup company formed by Palm Computing's founders, has now formally released their first product, the Palm III-like Visor range. Uniquely, the Visor handhelds feature a special 'Springboard' expansion socket, into which such modules as modems, pagers, MP3 players and memory packages can be plugged.

Andy Nott

Shareware Shorts

Steve Litchfield, maintainer of the 3-Lib shareware library, takes a look at the latest additions to the world of Psion shareware...

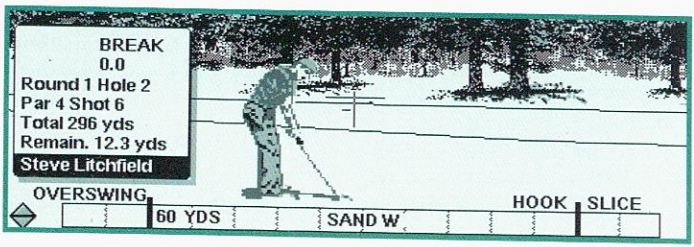
Another issue, another software house. But this one's different—whichever of its products you use it won't cost you a penny.

FreEPOC (*www.frepoc.de*) was launched in October, with a lot of Internet publicity and a very well thought out web site. Being new, their portfolio of applications is still quite small (in single figures), but there are a number of well known Psion authors now attached to FreEPOC and the range should grow quite fast. The people behind the project also encourage general participation, on the premise that even if you can't program you might be able to knock up a graphic, game level or foreign translation. Similar projects have come and gone in the past, but FreEPOC looks to have enough momentum to stay the course and I wish it well for the future.

Revo alert

With the arrival of the Psion Revo, things are beginning to change in the world of shareware. For the first time, Psion authors are having to seriously consider screen sizes other than the Series 5's ubiquitous 640 by 480 pixels, a subject I touched on in the last issue. Yes, the GeoFox, Osaris and Series 7 all have different screens, but their numbers are likely to be insignificant compared to the mass market sales of the 5, 5mx and now the Revo. Games present the largest problem, of course, and so far only my own *Atomic* (Tetris) and *Fairway* (golf simulation) are available for the small screen, plus RMR's *Defender* arcade classic.

More serious applications are usually easier to convert, perhaps only requiring a few scroll bar and font changes to become fully Revo-compatible, and so far I've counted a



Golfing away the festive season on a Revo

couple of dozen at least. So as not to keep repeating myself throughout Shareware Shorts, I'll use the convention that (apart from games) anything for EPOC should run happily on the new Revo. If you download a program and find it doesn't fit the Revo's 480 by 160 pixel screen, an email or phone call to the author will usually be enough to invoke a programming stint and a new version.

Series 3 / SIBO

16 bits on my wagon...

As mentioned in Newsreel, Psion have officially dropped all production of 16-bit palmtops, but software for the Siena and Series 3 just keeps on coming. **Shaun Murdoch**'s *V2* is a new compendium of programs, including Mobile Stock Taker, Millennium Countdown, Web, Currency and Animator, all with obvious titles. There's also **Graham Parks**' scientific opus *Q-Calc*, as featured in issue 25's Three For All. All these programs will run on either the Siena or the Series 3 range.

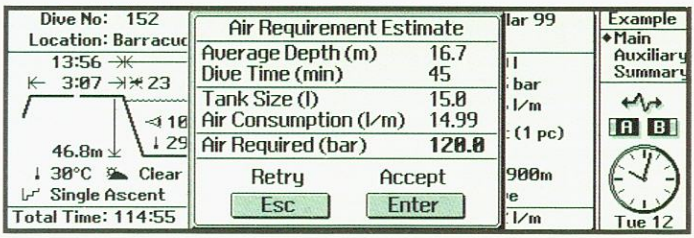
The 'program name of the month' award goes to **Daniel Cheng**'s *Siendicate*, an authorised Siena adaptation from **Mike Panchaud**'s well known *Syndicate* application. It's designed to check multiple entries in the UK lottery and is quite fast, checking about 20 entries (or 'boards') per second.

As one of longest standing shareware authors of all (anybody remember Websurf?), I promised **Arnaud Weil** I'd mention his *Graph+* mathematical function plotter, similar to those found on many pocket graphic calculators. Cartesian coordinates and multiple functions are all handled efficiently and quickly.

...and I'm still rolling along

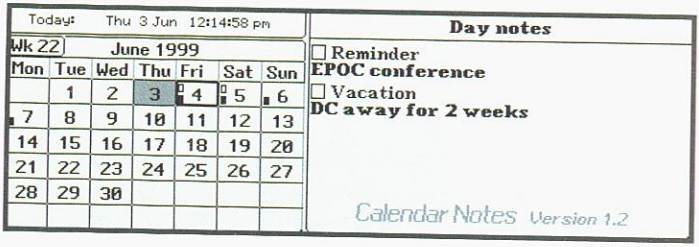
Divers (and there are many in the Psion community) will appreciate *DiveTime*, by **Doug Cunningham**. It's intended to simplify dive logging, especially those made using a dive computer or dive timer, and can import information from the popular Aladin range. It also calculates air consumption, either from a dive profile or directly from a computer. Previously logged dives are stored in a database, allowing total dive times, average air consumption and surface intervals to be calculated. Air consumption trends can even be plotted on a graph.

Something people have been asking for since the first release of the Series 3 is a way of getting back into protected Word files after having forgotten the password. *WordCrypt*, by **Adam Brinley Codd**, may be able to help out. It asks for the first nine letters of the document (which you'll probably be able to have a guess at, e.g. the title) and then uses them to work out the password and decrypt the rest of the document.



Comprehensive support in DiveTime

An alternative view of your month in Calendar Notes

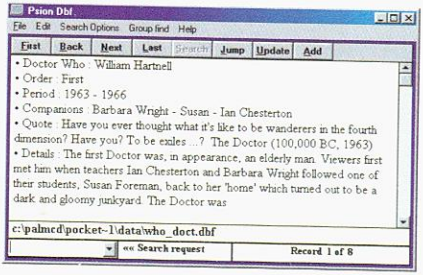

Today: Thu 3 Jun 12:14:58 pm
Wk 22
June 1999
Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun
1 2 3 4 5 6
7 8 9 10 11 12 13
14 15 16 17 18 19 20
21 22 23 24 25 26 27
28 29 30
Day notes
Reminder
EPOC conference
Vacation
DC away for 2 weeks
Calendar Notes Version 1.2

Philip Bister's *Calendar Notes* is a monthly calendar with the facility to attach day notes to any day slot. These can be reminders of forthcoming events or things to do. All notes and appointments for the selected day are automatically sorted into one of four categories and neatly displayed on a notepad screen by the side of the calendar. Calendar Notes is not intended to replace the Agenda application built into the Psion—the interface and operation is entirely different.

For those who don't want the expense or disk space hit of PsiMail Internet, *eMail-It* is a new email-only utility from **Mark Richardson**. It can send and receive email over a dial-up line to any ISP that uses a standard username/password dialog, and switches to PPP from then on. Although you can send email attachments, you can't currently receive them.

Back on the desktop

Psdbview is a Windows program for reading, updating and creating Psion '.dbf' database files. Apart from the obvious use of working with Series 3 data, it's also useful as a compact Windows database application. Written by **Mark Stevenson**. If you have trouble installing this from the Palmtop CD, note that as of CD10 we've included more of the companion Windows library files.


Psion Dbf
File Edit Search Options Group find Help
First Back Next Last Search: Jump Update Add
• Doctor Who : William Hartnell
• Order : First
• Period : 1963 - 1966
• Companions : Barbara Wright - Susan - Ian Chesterton
• Quote : Have you ever thought what it's like to be wanderers in the fourth dimension? Have you? To be exiles ...? The Doctor (100,000 BC, 1963)
• Details : The first Doctor was, in appearance, an elderly man. Viewers first met him when teachers Ian Chesterton and Barbara Wright followed one of their students, Susan Foreman, back to her 'home' which turned out to be a dark and gloomy junkyard. The Doctor was
c:\palmcd\pocket~1\data\who_doct.dbf
«« Search request
Record 1 of 8

Series 5 / EPOC

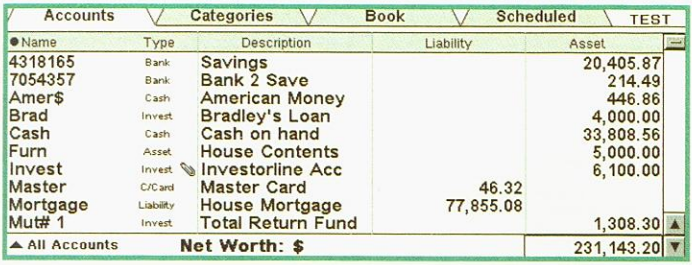
EPOCket banking

Financial aids are perennially popular, with every month seeing yet another EPOC bank account manager. This time it's the turn of **Richard Ryerson**'s *Pocket Bank*, with all the usual account, category and transaction functions. The best selling *RMRBank* and *ABP* have also been updated recently, as has **Guillaume Dupont**'s share management opus *Porfolio*. This latter now features a date-selectable transaction summary, a new account performance measurement, VPU (Value per Unit), and exporting and importing of transactions in QIF format.

Trip+, from **Eric Sebban**, is the ultimate business trip manager, letting you look after trip details, distances, expenses and company-specific bonuses.

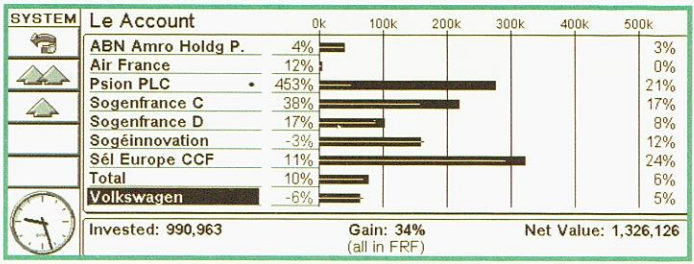
On your bike

Biklog5 is made for cyclists who like to keep track of their bicycle rides over a period. It isn't



Manage your riches with Pocket Bank

Porfolio (sic)—managing your stocks and shares

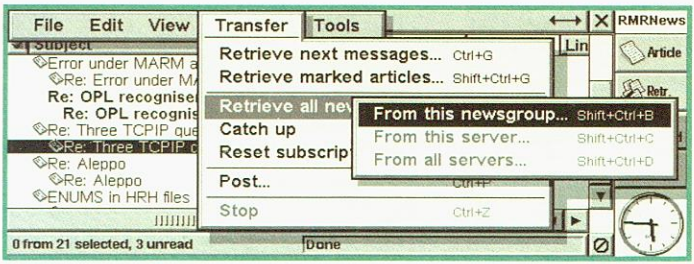


meant to be used during the ride as a cycle computer, but as an extension of it to store the cycle computer data and to analyse your riding history. Freeware from **Jaap Lam**.

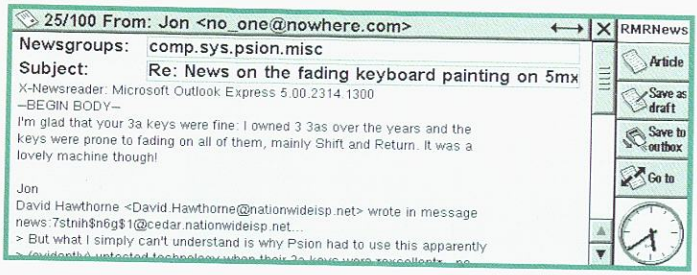
Philip Bister's also been busy programming for the Series 5/5mx. *Pbconvert* is a conversion calculator featuring a full graphical interface, operated entirely with the pen. It can be used as a basic calculator in its own right, but also contains a host of useful conversion categories. This combination gives you the ability to do a conversion and then make further calculations on the result without the need to re-enter a value.

News at last

Even if beaten to the FTP punch by Neuon (see page 7), **RMR Software** have been the first to implement a full Internet newsgroup reader for EPOC. *RMRNews* handles both posting and receiving, working if necessary with the full set of 30,000 newsgroups. A full graphical interface includes indented threads and many of the niceties of desktop equivalents.

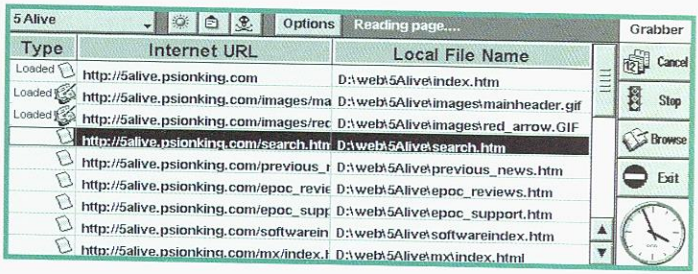


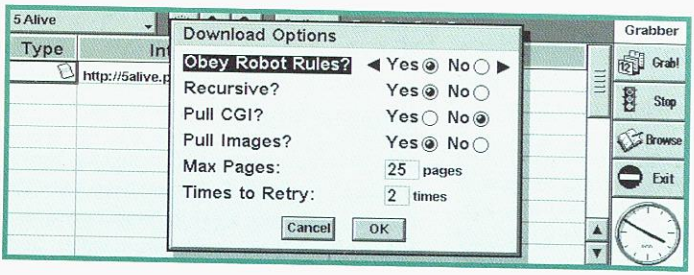
RMRNews-scanning a group...



...and reading a newsgroup message

Web Grabbing in progress...





Configuring a Web Grabber session

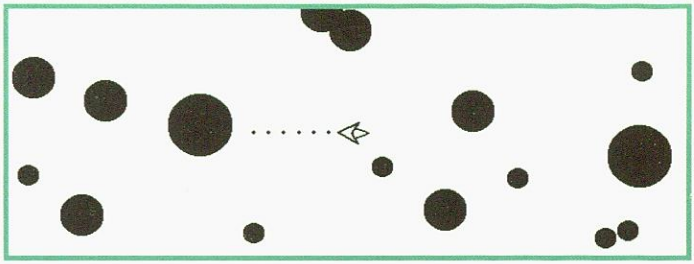
Kabestin are another software house producing Internet-friendly applications. *Web Grabber* downloads web pages and prepares them for viewing offline, depositing them in the folder of your choice and rewriting page URLs to point to the collected pages. These can then be viewed by the EPOC Web browser.

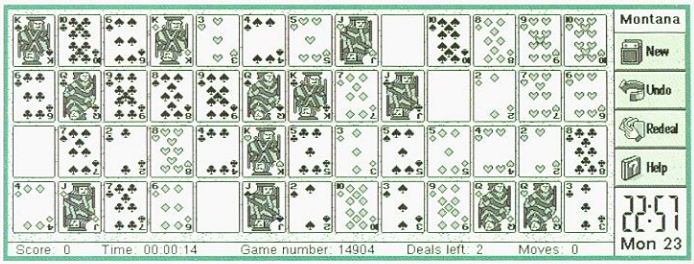
News just in from **WuLi** is that *Mentor* (reviewed in issue 25, p44) has been significantly upgraded. This life management program now includes a 'Tree' pop-up window to navigate the task hierarchies, plus sort and find functions. There's now also a proper printed manual for registered users, mirroring the HTML version on their web site.

TomeRaider

A clever name for a clever application. The *TomeRaider* shareware project, led by **Sabs Kovax**, aims to implement large reference databases in a vastly more efficient form than EPOC Data. Already converted are various public domain ency-

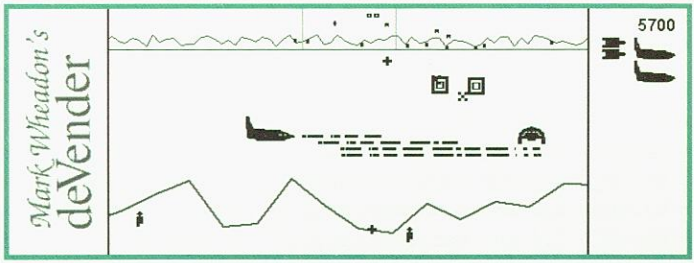
Spots before your eyes—stylised blasting in Astrocks





RMRMontana—high detail and high scores

Played the game, got the teeshirt!

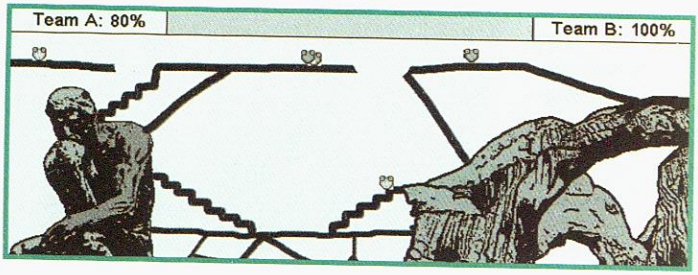


clopaedias and dictionaries, plus subsets of the Internet Movie Database. Despite the compression used, the resulting files are still understandably large and to save your phone bills we've included *every* TomeRaider file available on Palmtop CD10! The program's speed is very impressive, bringing up references in multi-megabyte files in a couple of seconds.

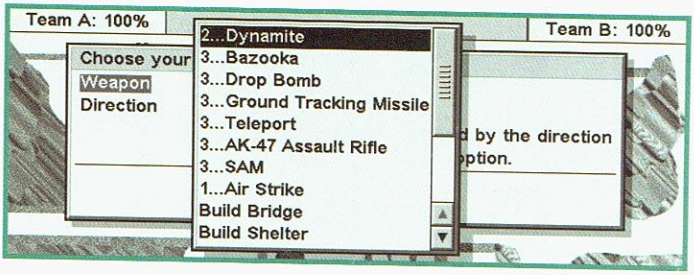
Christmas fun

As befits the last issue before Christmas, I know you're on the edge of your seats wondering what new games have been released to tide you over the holiday period—I just hope you like Asteroids, the old rock-blasting arcade game. Two new versions have been released, *Asteroids* from **Neuon** and *Astrocks* from **Ben Vaughan**.

RMRReverse is a new version of the classic strategy game Reversi, just one of three new releases from **RMR Software**. The second is *RMRMontana*, a points-scoring card solitaire. Finally, *DeVender* is a port of the classic Defender coin-op for the Series 5/5mx, with horizontally-scrolling starfields and rapid-fire spaceships. Hopefully setting a (fashion) trend,



'Worms' in space—Rippers takes the plot into the next galaxy



Possible moves in Rippers—most of them violent!

people registering this within 10 days of installation get a free, quality teeshirt.

More originally, **Garry Taylor**'s *Wrippers* is a new strategy game, wrapped up in a humorous sci-fi battle setting. The Wrippers are tribes of warring creatures on an alien planet, apparently squabbling over a disputed game of Hangman(!) in a team-based deadly war-game. You can take one or both of the tribes, with your Psion playing the opposition if needed, taking it in turns to move Wripper 'team' members and firing a strangely human assortment of weapons at the enemy. These include bazookas, drop bombs and air strikes.

Also with a sci-fi theme, but less sophisticated and more of a platform puzzle, is **David Sansome**'s *Space Exodus*. Escape from an alien planet using nothing but your wits and reactions. Elements include collecting Star Crystals and pass-cards while avoiding spikes and other nasties.

Shareware availability

Please note that, by definition, many of the latest items featured in Shareware Shorts will *not* appear on existing Palmtop CDs, but on subsequent pressings of the disk. If you wish to receive every edition of the Palmtop CD then see page 111 for details.

For those with Internet access, an easy way to find software is to go to our 'Programmer directory' at *www.palmtop.co.uk/authors.htm* and look up the name of the author as highlighted in **bold** in this article. This will take you to the author's web site, from where you can find out more about the product and download it directly.

What is shareware?

Written by professional programmers and enthusiasts to meet specific (and sometimes unusual) needs, shareware is often supplied for use on a thirty day trial basis. If you like the software you are then asked to send a payment to the author. Some programs are freeware and don't require any payment at all. Each program comes complete with information about how to install and use it, and how to pay for it.

Where can I find it?

One way to get any of these programs is from the Internet. If you've got access to the web there are several on-line indices which link directly to the relevant author download page concerned. Most mainstream programs (excluding games and small utilities) appear in the comprehensive Palmtop Software Directory on our web site. This is an online listing with each entry having a hyperlink directly to the program author.

Things are actually even easier if you haven't got Internet access. As long as the program concerned has been out for a month or so, you should find a copy on the latest edition of the Palmtop CD-ROM, indexed into the appropriate category.

How do I use it?

Once you've found the file you want, there are three steps you may need to take:

1. Decompress the files if necessary. If you're new to computers you may not be familiar with compression. Psion applications normally have more than one component (e.g. the program itself, help files and pictures). These are normally compressed into one file, which makes them easier to distribute. Shareware on the Internet is most commonly compressed in 'Zip' format, and you can recognise these by the '.ZIP' at the end of the filename. Before you can install and run the program you need to extract these files with an 'unzip' program, which is freely available from your shareware supplier. If you use DOS, look for PKUNZIP, Windows users can use Winzip, and Mac users should try ZipIt or the commercial Stuffit Deluxe. You can also unzip files on your Psion without using another computer, using RMRZip, from www.rmrsoft.com .

2. Copy the files. You'll probably now need to transfer the unzipped files onto your Psion. To do this you'll need some external hardware, such as the PsiWin or EPOC Connect link cable or a Cyclone drive. Normally one of the unzipped software files is a text file (e.g. README.TXT), which can be read by any word processor. It explains how the program should be installed and where the files need to be copied to on your Psion. Series 5 and other EPOC owners should also look out for any special SIS files, which can be double-clicked on for really easy installation.

   See 'The Installation Game' in issues 14/15 and 'Installing software - the easy way' in issue 21 for a more comprehensive discussion of the above procedures.

3. Install the application. From your Series 3 or Siena System screen, select [Psion] + [I]. If the program was copied correctly the filename should appear in the list. Select it, press [Enter], and the icon should be installed, ready to run. EPOC users don't need to do this as the newly installed program will automatically appear on the Extras bar.

MailBox

Contribute and WIN PRIZES! EVERY letter published wins the author a free Palm-Tec case, worth at least £25!

Give us free PsiMail!

I read with interest the letter on "Castrating the Series 3" in issue 25, and couldn't agree more. Why not make the Series 3 PsiMail Internet software available free, now the Series 3 is no longer produced? Free Internet software—even with no further support from Psion—would help to allow this large group of users to continue doing what comes most naturally—communicating!

Steven Butterworth, Rotkreuz, SWITZERLAND

Demand for colour screens

Reading the Internet newsgroups and the mentions in *Palmtop*, there seem to be so many people hankering after a colour screen. I have been a user of a Psion Series 5 for nearly a year now and, though it's true to say that the screen can be a bit 'muddy' and reflective at times, often find a slight alteration to contrast or turning on the backlight makes the screen more than acceptable.

I also own a laptop which has a superb 13" colour display. However, after purchased my Psion 5 I have hardly needed—or wanted—to use the laptop for general office tasks or email. Why? Not only does it take several minutes to boot up, but it has little more than 1½ hours of 'real use' battery life, and while the colour screen is great in an office, it is absolutely useless outside in the open air. Try using any colour laptop/palmtop outside in daylight and the screen is often unusable. The Psion 5 screen, on the other hand, excels in the open air. The screen is wonderfully clear, even in bright sunshine.

Although colour screens look sexy in a showroom, in real life they're still not very practical for PDAs. Both Palm and Psion recognise this fact and it is only the WinCE crowd who seem to produce nothing but colour PDAs.

Colour screens are great for TVs, videos, cameras and PCs, but on a PDA a colour screen is nothing more than an expensive gimmick. If you want to be able to use a palmtop in any environment and not worry about battery life, the mono screen is still, for my money, the best option. And it's considerably cheaper too.

Adam Jackson, Shenley, Hertfordshire

Psion bedfellow

Last year my husband and I went skiing in the Swiss Alps and I had the misfortune to break my right knee. The break was so severe that I had to be operated on immediately and the doctors were unsure whether I would even be able to walk again after the surgery.

While in hospital, my Psion helped me to while away the hours, as my room-mate could only speak German and I could only speak English and French. She was intrigued by the Psion and the fact that it seemed to keep me

busy for all those hours. I showed her what it could do and although I couldn't understand what she was saying, I could tell she was impressed. To cut a long story short, I stayed in the hospital for five days and I was able to walk a few months later. My Psion made my stay in the hospital much more pleasant by keeping my fingers and mind busy.

I have since purchased the Berlitz Phrase Book software in case anything similar happens to me again. With the help of my Psion, I should at least be able to communicate with my room-mate!

Nicole Leduc, Ottawa, CANADA

Where's the Series 3 coverage?

It is not often that I write letters to magazines, but *Palmtop*'s recent attitude towards the Series 3 has prompted me to put finger to keyboard. Your coverage for the Series 3 range has been getting less and less—I find it hard to believe that such a popular machine can all of a sudden be relegated from 90% of every issue down to a few token pages.

There are some of us Series 3 owners who enjoy our machines and cannot afford to jump on the technology bandwagon every time Psion release a new machine!

Nigel Denney, Sittingbourne, Kent

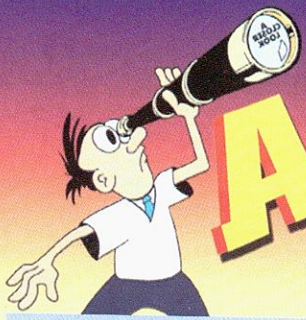
Since the appearance of the Series 5 we've necessarily had to evolve the magazine's content to cover both machine types. Though it's impossible to find a mix that keeps everyone 100 percent happy, we've tried wherever possible to make articles cover both models. These include the features on backups, Agenda add-ons, advanced spreadsheeting, Mac connectivity and beginner's programming in this issue alone, in addition to the usual 'THREE for all'.

With virtually no new commercial Series 3 software now appearing, our reviews section is now understandably devoid of Series 3 material, but we devote a significant portion of Shareware Shorts to these machines, as there are still a number of shareware programs appearing. Our relative coverage of the different Psion models is governed by the proportion of our readership using each machine (now more than 85% using a Series 5 or later) and the quantity of new products available for us to discuss.

Readers may have spotted the slight change in the magazine's title in this issue, from 'The journal for today's Psion user' to 'The journal for Psion computers and compatibles'. This reflects the fact that future issues of *Palmtop* will give increasing coverage to the entire range of EPOC machines, including the Series 7, Revo, Oregon Osaris and the Ericsson MC218.

It's true that Series 3 coverage will gradually continue to diminish within the pages of *Palmtop*, especially as Psion have now discontinued 3mx production (see page 5). By following the progressive migration to EPOC computers we hope to give the best possible content to the maximum number of readers. In the short term, we'll continue to make as many articles as possible relevant to *both* platforms - Steve Clack.

Don't forget that you can submit your letters by normal mail to the address given on page 1, or alternatively by email, to editor@palmtop.co.uk. Please be sure to put "MailBox" in the 'subject' line of your email.



A Closer Look

...at some of the newest and most interesting products for your Psion

Star Ratings:

★★★★★	Excellent
★★★★☆	Good
★★★☆☆	Average
★★☆☆☆	Fair
★☆☆☆☆	Poor
☆☆☆☆☆	Dismal

Interpreting reviews

Quality: the *Quality* star rating reflects how well the product works, whether it includes all the features you'd expect, whether the interface is consistent and easy to use, and in data-based software products it also reflects the quality of the information contained in the program.

Value: the *Value* star rating reflects the value for money of the product, taken within the context of what the program (or other product) does. Therefore a simple utility program will be rated differently to a sophisticated application at the same price.

Revo 23

Route Planner Millennium 31

Palmtop GPS 35

In-Car-Holder and Safety Clip 37

QuickP 39

Collins English Dictionary 42

I'm relieved that the success or failure of the Revo is not solely down to my personal feelings; a few months on from receiving the Psion Revo I still have divided opinions. On the one hand it's one of the sexiest and most compact little palmtops you're ever likely to hold, and on the other there are a few unfortunate omissions that tend to mar the Revo experience.

At the Revo's launch, Psion appeared very excited by their new creation—certainly the concept is a great one. Take many of the best features of the Series 5mx and cram them into a palmtop effectively half the size, and then aim the product fairly and squarely at new markets and new customers who expect an organiser to be no larger than a small diary or notebook.

A new angle on design

The two-tone, dark blue and silver case is stylish, if a little obviously plastic in construction. As with every Psion clamshell palmtop since the dawn of time, there's a clever sliding hinge mechanism. Reminiscent of the Series 5 but with the keyboard sliding out in a smooth curve, the rear of the unit gets arched downwards to give the open Revo a decent typing and screen angle. Although the screen hinges look no more substantial than on the '5', there's less weight involved and I'd expect the Revo to be more robust. Less weight also means less energy to be dissipated if the unit is accidentally dropped.

The curvaceous design was a specific goal, aimed at young professionals whose jobs and lifestyle wouldn't thus far have brought them into contact with the palmtop world.

Once opened however, the screen layout and keyboard appearance are almost identical to the Series 5mx, apart from the 'black on off-white' keys and a generally miniaturised form. As with the Series 5 design, a microswitch (buried this time in the bowels of the unit, to avoid dust problems) optionally turns the Revo on when opened and off when closed.

Clear as crystal

Switching on the Revo reveals perhaps the biggest plus point of this new model: following the lead of the keyboardless 3Com Palm V, Psion have used a 3M super-reflective screen that gives good contrast in most lighting conditions. It certainly wipes away memories of the dull, low-contrast screens on the early Series 5s.

In fact, Psion claim that the display is so good that you don't need a backlight, and have thus omitted to fit one—when it's too dark to see this display it'll probably be too dark to see the keyboard as well. I don't agree though, having tried the Revo for a month in a variety of different situations, I've found that the screen becomes unreadable long before the bright white keytops. Yes, a bit of clever angling to find a light-reflecting position can usually help, but wouldn't a backlight be a hundred times easier? Psion claim that adding a backlight would have reduced the available battery life. This isn't a very convincing argument, as modern backlights tend to consume only a few tens of milliamps and in typical night-time use (looking up a phone number or adding a to-do or appointment) it would often be switched on for only a matter of seconds.

Screen dimensions are 115 by 36mm, equating to 480 by 160 pixels, spookily identical to most of the Series 3 range and surprisingly adequate for most applications. Along the application bar below the screen are (from left to right) Contacts, Agenda, Email, Phone, Time, Calc and Jotter. It's interesting how the different applications have been rearranged for each Psion product, although I rarely disagree with Psion's choices on this. An Extras icon leads as usual to more built-in and third party applications, although Program, Comms, Record and Sketch are all notable by their absence, presumably because Psion deemed them unsuitable for the Revo's target market.

Sketch in particular is a huge omission. The Revo's stylus may be just about the thinnest

and cheapest pointing stick around, but many people would appreciate being able to doodle on screen, draw a map or use icons in Agenda. Documents beamed over from colleagues' Series 5s or downloaded from PocketInfo will just show a '?' icon in place of any embedded Sketch objects. Let's hope there's some way Psion, Symbian or a third party can 'patch' the Revo, retrofitting Sketch back in again at a later date.

The stylus fits snugly at the rear right side of the Revo's body and a small protrusion on its end lets you pull it out with a fingernail when needed. Although initial cosmetic impressions are awful, the stylus is surprisingly well designed and works adequately within the Revo concept. I particularly appreciated the simpler 'friction fit' system for holding the stylus in place—broken retaining mechanisms are a constant worry with the Series 5/5mx.

In and out

Rounding off the Revo's hardware are three connection ports. Firstly, an infrared eye, for communication with IR-equipped PCs, modems and printers, plus of course other EPOC palmtops and (to a limited extent, using Contacts' vCard compatibility) Palm organisers. Secondly, a 10-pin docking station connector, with two of the pins optionally used to provide mains power into the Revo. Finally, for use while travelling, there's an extra DC power socket at the extreme right rear, meaning that you only have to take the mains adaptor in your suitcase (leaving the docking station back at base).

Power matters

For this new product, Psion's battery philosophy has changed radically. Traditional 'standalone' Psion palmtops have all used alkaline

batteries (e.g. Duracell), with the philosophy that in true adventuring spirit you might be far from mains power at least some of the time and that being able to replenish from a corner shop, anywhere in the world, is a good thing. With the Revo being aimed at young professionals who are always within reach of modern technology (their PC, good mobile phone coverage, and of course mains power outlets), a new way of doing things seems to make sense.

The docking station supplied in the box is smart and sleek, in the same shade of blue as the Revo itself. A one-sided connector protrudes from the sculpted top surface, and it's this that the Revo settles onto when 'docked'. The station's cable then disappears off to the back of your PC, with the 9-way 'D' connector being specially designed at the rear to also accept DC power from the mains adaptor. This is then fed into the Revo (along with the usual serial port information), which responds by lighting a special red LED while its two NiMH internal cells are charging. There's also visual confirmation on the toolbar of most applications with an animated 'filling up' icon.

Although NiMH batteries have a finite charging life, Psion estimate a typical working lifetime of around three years before return to a service centre is needed for replacement.

One big disadvantage of the Revo's docking station design is that the mating connector on the underside of the organiser is only accessible when open, meaning that you can't close the Revo and leave it charging on your desk. All the time you're docked, the organiser is open to dust and that much more vulnerable.

Psion claim about 12½ hours of normal usage over a week before needing to recharge, but NiMH cells work best when regularly topped up, so we'd expect most owners to fit into this easily by docking their Revo at least once a day, perhaps when synchronising Contacts or Agenda (see issue 25 for more on the synchronisation possibilities and problems). Yes, it's a new way of working with a Psion, but it's also something an awful lot of people seem to want. The ARM 710 processor is clocked at 36MHz, the same as the Series 5mx, and performance is largely similar in all departments. The Revo only comes in one memory size, 8MB, and apparently no plans to offer larger capacity models, which is a real pity.

Another restriction is the absence of a CF slot or other non-volatile storage media.

The new 'Today' System screen view

Tap, tap, tapping away

The keyboard is an intriguing beast indeed. Ultra-slim, to allow room for the guts of the Revo beneath, each key is hinged at its front edge, with its main body supported by a moulded protrusion in a rubber membrane. Key travel is thus less than a millimetre, and that only at the rear edge, with the front of the keytop simply pivoting. This, combined with the reduced key sizes (a pitch of 12½mm as opposed to around 14½mm on the Series 5 range), makes for slightly slower going than on the Series 5mx, achieving about 70% of our normal palmtop typing speed. Still very respectable for such a miniaturised mechanism, although you do have to get used to pressing towards the back of each key. As with the 5mx, there's a Euro currency symbol, accessible via [Fn]+[E].

New software

Although the basic operating system and software suite are EPOC Release 5 (ER5), the same as the Series 5mx and Ericsson MC218 (see issue 24 for full reviews), there are a few tweaks (apart from the aforesaid missing applications) done specially for the Revo. The System screen now has another 'face'—in similar fashion to the default view of a Windows CE Palm-sized PC, a 'Today' view shows appointments for the current day, to-dos in any list you specify and battery, link and memory information. Accessible via the System button at any time, Today is such a handy view that it would be good to see it as an optional 'power-on' screen. The original 'folder and file' System screen is here as well, and you can toggle between the two using the toolbar buttons.

Also new is Phone, which manages the connection between the Revo and your mobile phone. Reading and writing to both SIM cards and phone memory, Phone backs up your mobile's contact information and makes sure everything stays synchronised with the Revo's Contacts application. Phone will also dial numbers directly for you.

Online with the Revo

Psion describe the Revo as the "Pocket sized email organiser for people who want to stay in touch", leaving no doubt as to where they see its big focus. The Email application is thoroughly integrated with Contacts (as in other ER5 products) and also prominent on the application bar. One curious omission is that it's not possible to send faxes from the Revo, something which we'd have thought many people in the Revo's target market would want to do from time to time.

Two more online thrusts emphasise the Revo's focus. An eSetup wizard is provided on the Extras bar, to guide new users through the fiddly business of setting up an EPOC palmtop for Internet use. In reality, it's no more than a simple question and answer layer on top of Control panel's 'Internet' and 'Modems',

Phone Manager integrates with existing contact numbers

Dialling a number from Contacts

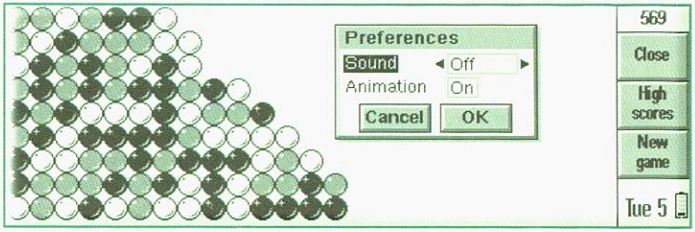
and Email's 'Account settings' dialogs, but it's handy nevertheless and ensures nothing gets forgotten.

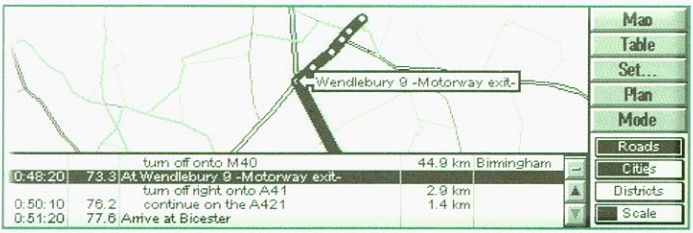
The final online aid is Psion.net, Psion's second foray into the world of Internet Service Providers (ISPs), using LineOne as both host and portal onto the web. Each Revo comes with a fold-out Psion.net 'Setting up' guide, with plenty of screen shots, so it's hard to see where a new user could go wrong. As with most free ISPs though, technical support is expensive, at 50p a minute. Early users have also reported very slow access speeds, although in the current grid-locked Internet climate this applies to many ISPs.

Incidentally, the Web browser is not in the Revo's ROM and has to be loaded from CD, so allow around a megabyte for it if you plan to surf. Once installed, it works very well (and wirelessly).

eSetup - midway through the process of setting up a new account

The solitary solitaire - Cascade





Route Planner Millennium running on the Revo

Other software

Also loadable from the CD is the spelling checker, although I can't imagine why this wasn't simply put in the ROM, as on other EPOC machines. At least with Web, Psion have the excuse that Internet web standards evolve and require periodic browser upgrades.

Every couple of years, Psion like to ring the changes with a new game, and the Revo is the latest guinea pig. Cascade is a reworked version of a shareware favourite, in which you strategically remove blocks of balls from a gravity-heavy grid.

Despite not having the OPL Program editor, the Revo does have the OPL runtime interpreter, meaning that it can (after a fashion) run OPL programs that have been translated on the PC or on another EPOC machine. It will be down to software authors to scale down their interfaces for the Revo—by default the right and bottom edges of most existing EPOC applications are lost with the Revo's smaller screen size. Purple Software, Palmtop BV and others have all announced and demonstrated fully compatible software already, and I expect most major programs to make allowances for the Revo fairly quickly.

Psion are traditionally very good at providing localised versions of their products in different language-speaking markets, and the Revo will initially be available in English, French, German, Dutch, Italian and Spanish.

revo™

The verdict

So should you consider down-sizing to the Revo from a Series 5 or 5mx? Almost certainly not, unless you need the smaller size and weight. 8MB isn't very much by the time you've got EPOC running, the web browser installed and a reasonable number of document files open. Some of the software omissions will also rankle, as will the somewhat 'dead' keyboard.

If you currently use a (now sadly discontinued) Series 3, you'll view the Revo more positively. Yes, your existing investment in accessories and software is largely wasted. But when your 16-bit Psion finally gives up the electronic ghost, this new ultra-slim palmtop is a sensible choice. It's smaller, faster and a lot more capable, fully supported and probably future-proof for as long as your Series 3 lasted.

But stop. All this talk of upgrading is, I think, missing the whole point of the Revo. What the it does well is fill a gap in the market. It's a PDA-sized (little larger than a Palm III or Windows CE Palm-sized PC) palmtop with a real keyboard and a modern, 32-bit, rich-featured and Internet-ready operating system. It's also very accessible to first time Psion owners, with a good spiral-bound 220-page 'handbook' (including a fold-out cardboard 'quick start guide') and all the essentials they need to get going straight away.

Psion apparently set the price of £300 a while ago, following market research. Yes, there's an awful lot of computer here, with EPOC's office-standard functions and compatibility with Windows and the Internet. But will consumers in the High Street shops see past the immediate factors of size and price? Apart from its obvious unique selling point of the keyboard, the Revo is roughly comparable to the Palm V in price, vision and perceived function. The latter is however significantly smaller, has a huge base of 100% compatible software and has the advantage of a gesture recognition/backlit screen combination that can be used in the dark.

The Revo is a solid concept that's very well implemented on the whole. If Psion can get the price point and marketing pitch right, their aim of creating a whole new generation of EPOC users may just be realised after all.

Steve Litchfield

Revo

From: All Psion dealers

Availability: Now

Price: £300 including VAT

Quality ★★★★☆

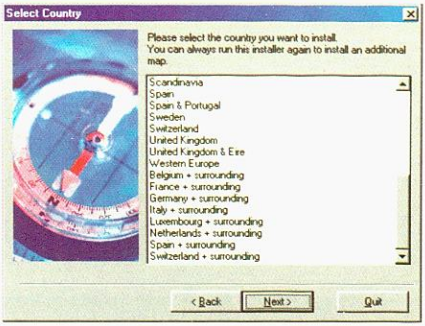
Value ★★★☆☆

Route Planner Millennium

When we first looked at Route Planner back in issue 14 (under its original name of 'En Route'), we said "You have absolutely no excuse for getting lost ever again, this is software to die for". Two years, a name change and around five minor updates later, we come to Route Planner Millennium v2.11, which essentially does the same thing, but faster and better. Calculating optimum town-to-town routes is still its core function—something it does exceptionally well for all the (European only) countries covered. But what of all Route Planner's 'extra' features and what should you do if you purchased an earlier version?

It's a full commercial product, complete with a good 30-page manual, repeated in no less than five languages. It's worth reading this through before putting up on your shelf though, if only because there's absolutely no online help included with Route Planner.

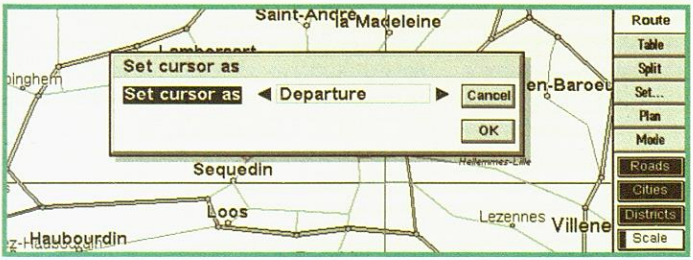
The CD containing the software is safely tucked into an envelope inside the manual's back cover, and inserting this into a PC kicks off a slick Windows installation system. After installing the necessary program files, any individual map file can be selected and copied over. Once installed, you're taken back to either select another country/map or to quit back to Windows. Unlike previous versions, EPOC install is used throughout, so there's no need to change your standard link settings.



Choosing a map in the Windows installer

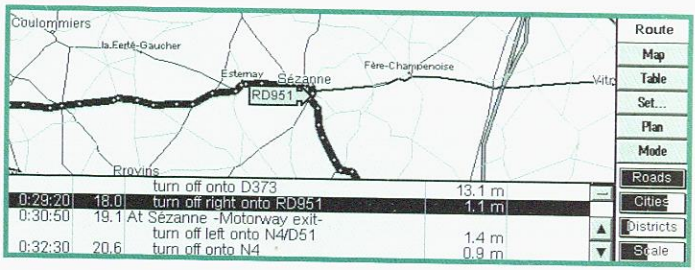
The CD includes over 100 different map sets, covering all European countries individually at several different resolutions, plus a selection of 'combination' maps (e.g. Spain/Portugal, Scandinavia/Denmark), made necessary as Route Planner can't otherwise plan routes across map boundaries. There's even a monster 12MB high detail map of the whole of Western Europe, should you feel the urge to plan a route from London to Rome.

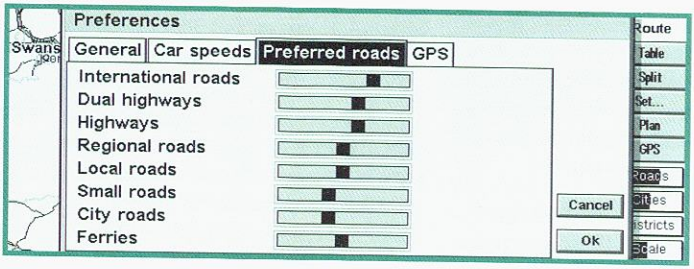
Efficient compression is used throughout Route Planner to keep data file sizes as small as possible. 2.5MB for the highest resolution UK map may seem like a lot, but this takes you down to minor road level, including largish roads through housing estates and villages. Admittedly these come up as 'unnamed small road' when tapped or when quoted in route instructions, but they're impressive to see nonetheless.



Starting off from a specific point on a minor road

Following a planned route





Telling Route Planner how you like to drive

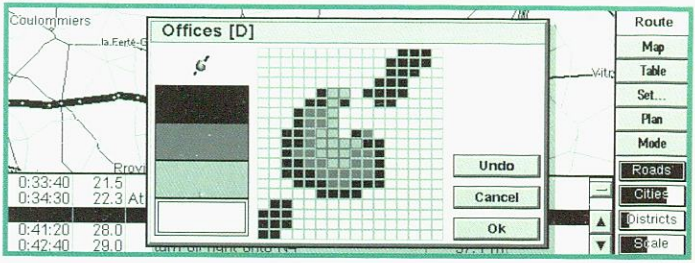
Planning a route is very flexible. Unlike previous route planners on other platforms, you're not limited by having to start or finish at predefined towns: by setting the cursor as 'Departure' or 'Destination' you can travel to or from any point on the road network in any country. An 'Avoid area' feature lets you drag out areas on the map that you'd like to exclude from route planning, perhaps to avoid a traffic jam or a known bottleneck.

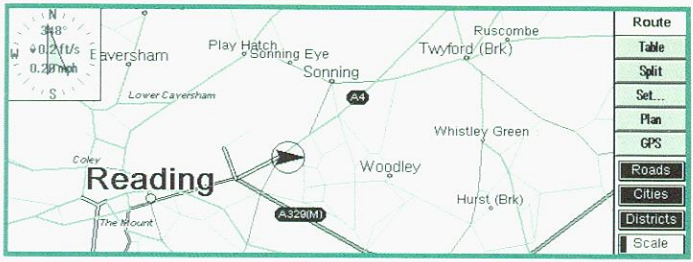
Planning a 130 mile journey took a quite acceptable 24 seconds on my Series 5mx, with options to calculate the quickest, shortest or preferred route. These deserve a sentence of explanation: 'quickest' is calculated using your own estimates of speed on different types of road and 'preferred' takes into account your own choices as to which road types you prefer to drive on. Both of these are set up within 'Map | Set preferences'. There's also now an 'alternative' option, which attempts to find a quick, but different, route to the one previously planned.

After clearing a route summary screen (showing journey time and distance), the map is auto-scaled to show the optimum route and a selection of relevant surrounding roads and towns. I found Route Planner's determination of how much detail to display at each stage very well thought out, with good distinction between motorways, major and minor roads and with town and city names 'floating' easily on top. And if at any point you want more or less road or city detail there are sliders on the toolbar and keyboard shortcuts set up to manually override Route Planner's suggestions.

Mastering Route Planner's different modes is key to using it effectively, using the spacebar and [Enter] to toggle the route indicator (the annotated arrows that track progress along a route) and cross-hair cursor on and off. Both the table of route instructions and the map can be split and tiled horizontally or vertically, with a tap of the down arrow key taking you onto the next road junction and views scrolling and redrawing as necessary.

Editing your own overlay icons





Using a GPS to locate my position on the map

A variety of very welcome usability functions are built in, such as being able to predefine up to 10 locations and assign number key shortcuts to them. Other useful single-key shortcuts include [I] and [O] to zoom in and out (the zoom command icons are used to zoom map text and annotations).

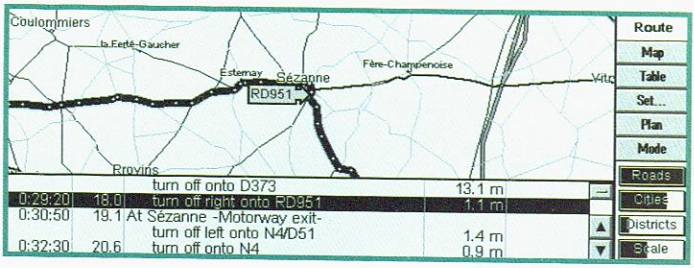
This version's new 'Route history' feature is an excellent time-saver, allowing quick redisplay of routes found earlier. And as you'd expect, routes can be printed off as a formatted table, for use by others or when you'd rather leave the palmtop at home. Finally, an overlay feature (similar to the well publicised one in Psi-Mapper) means that creating custom sets of geographical information is as easy as tapping to position the cursor and using 'New location'. A clever overlay icon editor is built in, alleviating the need to fiddle around with Sketch and .mbm image files.

When originally launched, Palmtop BV seemed hopeful of a barrage of user-submitted overlays to enhance the program, but the selection available for each country is still very small. Apart from such obvious ones as railway stations and airports, I'd expect most overlay use to be with custom data. Two features I found useful were being able to have any number of overlays open at the same time and scanning for the closest overlay item to any given location (e.g. the nearest railway station).

Of course, it's Route Planner's GPS support which is its sexiest feature. I've been testing it with the companion Palmtop GPS (see next review), which plugs into the back of a Series 5 or 5mx, and the combination really is 'plug and play'. Going into 'Preferences' and telling Route Planner to start scanning for GPS signals is just about all you need to do. By checking an extra box in the dialog you can even get the program to intelligently step through a planned route as the GPS cursor passes each appropriate point.

Plugging in a GPS will unfortunately highlight any inaccuracies in the map data, and I discov-

Calibrating the GPS / map combination



ered that the Route Planner vector maps can be as much as a kilometre 'out', depending upon the part of the country being shown and how close you are to a major junction. Not a problem for route planning obviously, but with GPS turned on it gave such curious effects as apparently travelling through fields or a neighbouring village rather than on a motorway. v2.11 of the Millennium Edition features the same useful GPS calibration option as its Street Planner stable-mate, ensuring that small mapping offsets for each area can be corrected. Obviously it would have been better for the maps to be perfectly positioned in the first place, but given that the raw map data is 'bought in' and outside Palmtop Software's control, at least they've done what they can.

Another small but irritating problem with the maps used by Route Planner is that despite the box's claim to use 'updated '99 maps', new roads built in 1998 aren't shown and I'd estimate the UK maps at least to be approximately two years out of date. There's again not much Palmtop Software can do about this, but it's important to be aware of this limitation.

I've already said that newcomers shouldn't hesitate in buying a copy, but what if you already own a previous version, bought in the last two years? Well, original purchasers can get upgraded to v1.4 via a free patch on the Palmtop Software web site. Beyond that, you should consider whether you need the detailed improvements in this Millennium Edition (SiRF-compatible GPS support, route history, GPS calibration and Revo/Series 7 support, to name but a few) before parting with your money. At least there's a very welcome upgrade package, at half the price of the full product.

Steve Litchfield

Route Planner Millennium

From: Major Psion dealers

Availability: Now

Runs on: All EPOC models

Price: £50 inc. VAT (£25 upgrade)

Quality ★★★★☆

Value ★★★★☆

Palmtop GPS

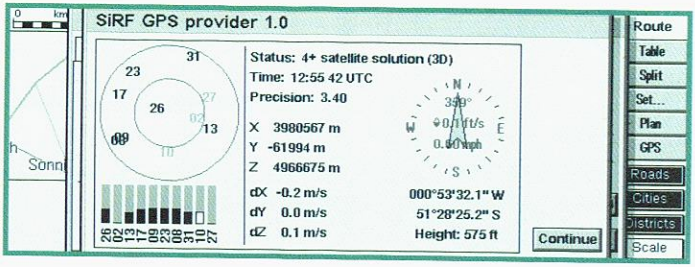
We've covered the subject of Global Positioning System receivers before, but there's never been a dedicated Psion-enabled unit, especially not one as well conceived as the Palmtop GPS.

Given that the vast majority of GPS-to-Psion connections are for in-car moving map use, and given that when plugged into the Psion the screen on the GPS is largely redundant, why not create a 'black-box' solution that works from a 12 volt lighter socket and which terminates in the correct Psion serial plug? In fact, Garmin used to do such a screen-less unit, but you had to mess with null-modem adaptors and unwieldy lengths of cable. Palmtop Software seem to have done it right, adding in next generation 'SiRF' technology at the same time.

SiRF, it turns out, is a very good thing indeed:

- Satellites are locked onto in fractions of a second, at least 10 times quicker than traditional GPS receivers. From a 'cold' start, the longest an SiRF GPS will take to get a full positional fix is around a minute.
- Accurate positioning can be maintained even when satellite contact is intermittent, as in a densely-packed city, with often only one satellite visible at a time.
- Satellite locks can be maintained even under tree cover, when signal strength can be down to 10% of that under an open sky.

The Palmtop GPS is a small, gently-rounded black box, around 75mm square by 25mm in depth. There's a strong magnet on its underside, designed to clamp (police siren-style) onto the metallic top of your car. Four rubber feet sit just higher than the magnet itself, to prevent it scratching, and I couldn't detect any movement of the GPS, even after an extended drive at 70mph.



Handling the SiRF information in Route Planner

One thing I was worried about was rain, especially since there are four tiny holes on the bottom of the unit. Palmtop Software claim that the device *is* weather proof, but after paying £150 or so for an electronic accessory I'd be tempted to bring it 'indoors' during really wet weather. Certainly it worked well enough sitting on the dashboard instead, although those with heated front windscreens will need to find an alternative position. The unit is supplied with a generous two metres of cable between GPS and dashboard connectors, enough for almost any setup. The cable is fairly thin and with the GPS on the roof I simply closed the car door onto the wire, using the rubber door seal to hold it in place.

A standard 12V cigarette lighter plug provides power to the GPS, with a handy 'On' LED that illuminates on the plug body when properly in place—most useful, as some lighter sockets can take a lot of wiggling to achieve a reliable power connection. There's also a flat 'Honda' plug, fitting the Psion 5, 5mx, 7 and Ericsson MC218. The signals that come down the wire can be switched between the SiRF binary and (default) NMEA plain text formats, but the former contains a lot more information and I'd expect GPS utility authors to make their code compatible in due course. Owners of older versions of Route Planner/En Route should note that there's a free application upgrade included in the GPS package to ensure you're fully SiRF-compatible. A similar upgrade is planned for Street Planner in the first quarter of next year.

Although the SiRF technology comes at something of a price, the Palmtop GPS has the potential to give Series 5/5mx owners a superlative in-car navigation system, bettered only by custom units that sell for thousands of pounds.

Steve Litchfield

Palmtop GPS

From: Major Psion dealers

Availability: Now

Runs on: All EPOC models

Price: £150 inc. VAT until 1/1/2000, £170 thereafter

Quality ★★★★½

Value ★★★½☆

In-Car-Holder and Safety Clip

As you may have gathered from the preceding two reviews, I've been examining the current state of the art in Psion-based in-car navigation. All of which would fall rather flat if the aforementioned Psion was left to slide around on the passenger seat. There have been many designs of in-car Psion holder over the past few years, but these have generally been both too expensive and too destructive (drilling holes—however small—in my car dashboard fills me with horror).

I knew things had moved on when I spotted this holder on a dealer's web site. The Safety Clip is a range of Swedish ABS plastic clips designed to attach to dashboard air vents and seams, sometimes with the aid of a single, small self-adhesive pad to stop lateral movement. Also supplied for installation purposes is a *vital* little plastic wedge to temporarily hold the dashboard seams apart while the clips are pushed into place. This allows the clips to be installed and removed without fear of damaging your car interior. Over 20 manufacturers' cars are listed on the comprehensive compatibility list and my Renault Megane Scenic didn't present a problem—a little leaflet came with the standard Megane clip, explaining how to get the best results on my variant.

Into the universal socket on the front of the Clip fits the Series 5 In-Car-Holder, a moulded tray that reclines at 45° to the vertical. Two recessed slots in the tray allow for a range of positions for the supplied velcro pads, which make sure your palmtop doesn't abandon ship when you drive over a pothole. Yes, it means that you have to attach a pair of Velcro pads to the bottom of your Psion, but with the pads in the extreme rearmost position they don't protrude beyond the height of the existing

Series 5 feet and therefore don't hamper normal desktop operation.

A cutout at the left-rear leaves room for a DC power cable to be inserted and of course the serial port is fully accessible for attaching a GPS input. And provided you remember to retract the dictaphone button cover before sitting the palmtop in the tray, the buttons remain operable (although of course you'd have to drive one-handed while actually recording).

With the weight of a Psion 5 in place, the tray assembly becomes a little wobbly, most of the movement being in the section of plastic between tray and socket. Although not a show-stopping problem, it does make typing on the palmtop a rather frustrating experience, even when just bashing out a short name to search for in Contacts. Clearing alarms with [Esc] or tapping the application icons work well though, and provided you keep your keyboard work to a minimum there's no reason why your Series 5 can't help you stay productive on the road, perhaps at lights or while in a traffic jam. Striking a balance between strength (to stop the assembly wobbling around) and flexibility (so that in the event of an accident it collapses and detaches) is tricky, and on the whole I think this solution has it pitched about right.

The physical positioning of the holder is just about perfect, giving maximum screen visibility. For 'read-only' applications such as GPS moving map, the combination works superbly and true road warriors will find this the ideal Christmas present.

Steve Litchfield

In-Car-Holder and Safety Clip

From: Allcomms Ltd
tel: 01235 811119
email: sales@allcoms.demon.co.uk

Availability: Now

Price: £27.50 inc. VAT, plus p&p

Quality	★★★★☆
Value	★★★★☆

QuickP

QuickP is just one of the plethora of to-do list/project management packages available for the Series 5 range. So why are these programs so popular when the built-in EPOC applications are so fully-featured? In general, the answer is that the built-in apps are file-based rather than project-based. Agenda's own To-do lists come closest, with most of the features necessary to manage small projects, though things become unwieldy with multiple projects or when a single one becomes overly large. Dedicated project management applications (like QuickP) add value by providing a consistent project-oriented view across all applications.

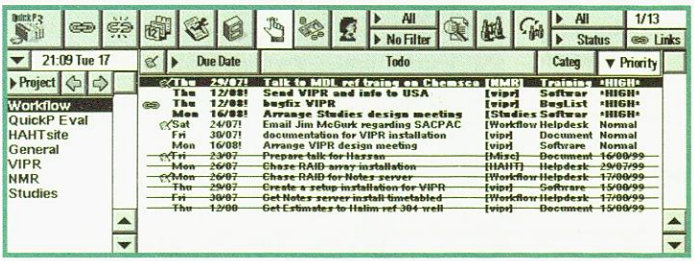
Screen space is well utilised in QuickP, encouraging you to navigate the program entirely via the stylus. You can move anywhere within the program, across functions and between projects, all with just a couple of taps on the screen.

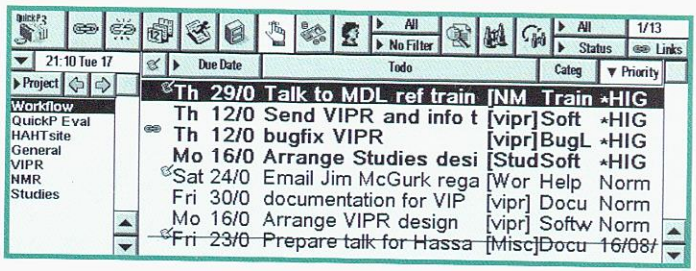
The main area of the screen contains all the functionality you need, although the zoom capability is largely restricted: 'small' is almost unreadable and 'large' shows rather too little detail. QuickP neatly overcomes this problem with a 'Zoom display' function in which the current entry is shown using over half the available screen area. Although this is very clear, it doesn't word-wrap tidily.

QuickP is organised in a very 'flat' manner, with a single view containing as many projects as you wish. Each project contains To-do, Tasks, Events, Documents, Contacts and Costs lists, defined as follows:

- A 'To-do list' is, quite naturally, a list of things for you to do.
- A 'Task list' (as defined by QuickP) is effectively a list of to-dos for other members of the group involved in the project.
- An 'Events list' covers items that are date and time oriented, rather than process oriented. Good examples would be meetings, delivery dates, etc. QuickP also provides a week-at-a-time 'busy' view for project-related events.
- The 'Documents list' links to anything else that can be accessed on the Series 5, such as a URL, a Word or Sheet file or a third party application.
- A 'Contact list' is for people who are pertinent to a specific project, although their details can also be shared across multiple projects. You can have up to 18 user-definable fields if you choose to use the QuickP contacts file, or you can simply link to an existing Contacts database or import information from a Data file.
- A 'Cost list' shows expenditure/income against each project. As it is implemented in QuickP, there are only two types of expense—materials or resources—but you

Lots of detail on screen, but all a bit hard to read—QuickP in zoomed out mode...





...and zoomed in, with proportionally less detail visible on screen

can have an unlimited number of categories in which to group expenditure items.

For the typical project manager, QuickP has several handy features. You can sort and filter across projects, giving a single view of all to-dos or events, and a special 'Today' button lists all the things that are currently due (or embarrassingly overdue).

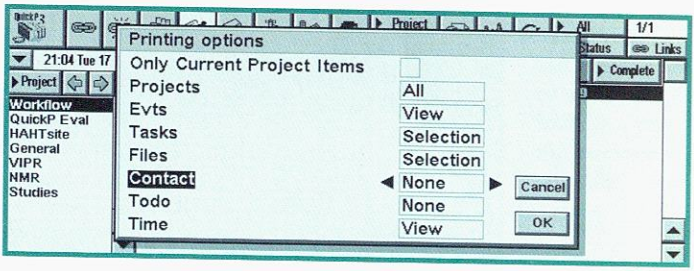
QuickP links are really shortcuts between entries. For example, a meeting could result in a Word document containing the minutes, a Sheet file of expenses, a series of tasks or events as actions and a new contact person for the project. All of these disparate items can be linked to a single Event entry recording the meeting date. This is an extremely powerful concept for grouping information together, and is not restricted to items within a project. *Anything* can be linked to anything else across *all* projects.

Almost all items can be optionally copied to your normal Agenda file without having to re-type them. This enables you to use QuickP as your primary application and yet still populate your Agenda for synchronisation with your remote desk diary using PsiWin.

An ad hoc (plain text) note capability is available on every item in every list in QuickP. Each note can be up to about 20K in size, although performance suffers badly with large notes. This feature is especially good for phone logs or meeting minutes. For the seriously disorganised, there is even a 'Generic note' facility for those ideas that hit you out of the blue, with no existing project or activity to store them under. All notes can be exported to discrete files if necessary.

Reporting from within QuickP is reasonably well implemented, though there are no options to define the layout or style of the generated report. There is an adequate export option, allowing you to clear out selected or expired events, completed tasks, etc. to a file, either as plain text or in QuickP format. My only criticism is that every report is generated on its own page—so to get a complete

Some fairly flexible printing options—but no choices when it comes to text formatting



Alternative software

Plan5 is a formal project management package for the Series 5. It provides methodological support for Pert analysis and Gantt charts, cost estimating and timed events. It can be used in a limited way to manage project documentation, but its strength is in planning and critical path analysis. QuickP does not attempt to provide this functionality, nor to be as rigorous as Plan5 in its project management. I have found that the two work well together, using Plan5 to draft a formal project plan and costings, and then linking to it as a QuickP project document. See issues 21 for a review of Plan5.

Notepad is a generic hierarchical jotter which I previously used extensively as a project management tool. Notepad is a more general tool than QuickP and is designed to integrate all the built-in Series 5 functionality in a hierarchical view. In fact, it's so hierarchical that this can get in the way of rapid operation, with new users finding the forced hierarchy a major conceptual problem. Recent releases of Notepad on the Series 5 have attempted to address this issue (Favorites, Projects, etc.), but I personally find QuickP significantly more intuitive and much faster to navigate. See issues 10 and 22 for reviews of Notepad.

overview you'll need to use a lot of paper. To be fair, QuickP is more orientated to rapid on-screen use than to full-blown corporate project reporting.

I was originally disappointed at QuickP's extremely slow start-up time, even thinking that my Series 5mx had perhaps 'locked up' in the process. Once started, however, the application can be left open at all times, so it's not a major issue. To help out further, QuickP includes a user-definable hotkey (initially [Fn]+[A]) to bring it instantly to the foreground.

Having been through a couple of the free upgrades from either of the QuickP download sites, the process is not quite as painless as I would like. To upgrade, you must create a new projects file, with the supplied utility copying and converting entries from your old file to the new one. You also lose your registration information each time. The upgrade always comes with full instructions though, and has gone smoothly on both occasions I've used it.

QuickP's help screens are quite limited, with no description of the program's on-screen icons and their meanings. There's no other documentation provided and I felt a tutorial would have been useful to give a quick insight into the power of the application.

Despite these niggles, QuickP is an intuitive, accessible and professionally written application that deserves a look from every budding project manager.

Graham Foster

QuickP

From: Palmscape (*www.palmscape.com*)

Availability: Now

Runs on: Series 5 and compatibles

Price: $25 (shareware)

Quality ★★★★☆

Value ★★★½☆

Collins English Dictionary

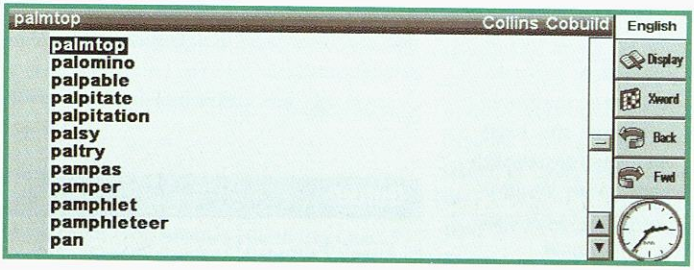
A good dictionary is an important reference for most people and an essential part of any writer's arsenal. As with any paper-based resource, its value is limited by its portability and the time it takes to thumb through and find what you're looking for. A computerised dictionary, if properly implemented, is supremely portable and offers super-fast lookup of words—something an 'old fashioned' dictionary can never match.

Palmtop Software's new Collins Cobuild Dictionary is an EPOC-based version of the 2000 page paper equivalent. It runs on all Psion compatibles, including the Series 7, Oregon Osaris and the Revo. Installation takes just under 6MB of storage space—relatively modest for such a large dataset.

With around 75,000 definitions, the Cobuild edition isn't the most exhaustive reference of its kind, but it's designed as a *practical* resource, particularly for students and those learning English. Word definitions tend to be quite short and to the point, but everything is presented in a refreshingly straightforward and readable fashion.

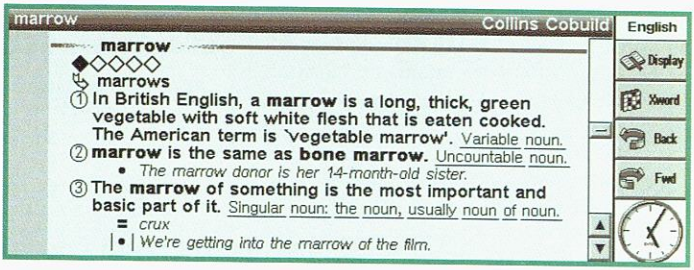
Palmtop Software's interface for the dictionary is as swift and slick as we've come to expect from their products, and includes underlined hypertext links to word classifications: so if a word appears as a 'countable noun', 'adjective', 'verb', etc. you can look up the term itself.

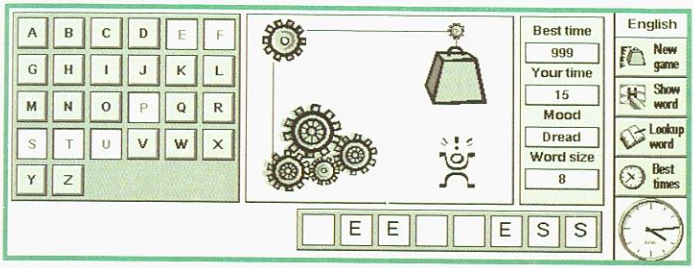
A tap of the [Tab] key or spacebar toggles between the program's two main views: a simple scrollable column of the words contained in the dictionary and a detailed view that shows the entire definitions. Palmtop's usual match-as-you-type facility means that you can simply type in the first few letters of the word you're looking for in either view, and it will instantaneously pop up—literally as fast as you can type it in. Pronunciation information is given, together with practical usage examples where appropriate.



The dictionary in simple word list mode. Tap on any word or press [Enter] to go to the full definitions...

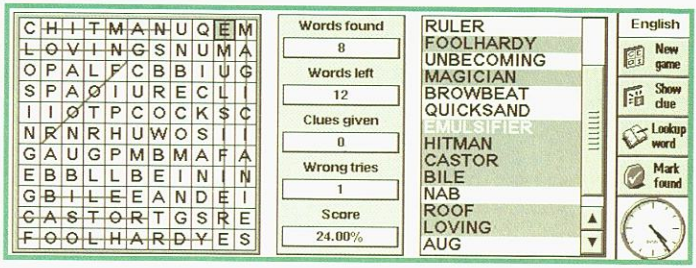
Full definitions, including word frequency, alternative meanings and examples


marrow
Collins Cobuild
English
marrow
marrows
① In British English, a marrow is a long, thick, green vegetable with soft white flesh that is eaten cooked. The American term is 'vegetable marrow'. Variable noun.
② marrow is the same as bone marrow. Uncountable noun.
• The marrow donor is her 14-month-old sister.
③ The marrow of something is the most important and basic part of it. Singular noun: the noun, usually noun of noun.
= crux
• We're getting into the marrow of the film.
Display
Xword
Back
Fwd



Hangman with a difference—guess the word in Squish man before the weight drops

The familiar Word Search puzzle comes to your Psion—all part of Collins Cobuild



As well as the basic dictionary, crossword and anagram facilities are provided, similiar to those in the Psion's built-in Spell checker, but of course giving the opportunity to look up definitions for all resulting words.

To add maximum value to the package, the authors have thoughtfully included two word games: *Squish man* and *Word search*. The first is similar to the classic Hangman, where you're required to find the letters to an unknown word before, in this case, a giant weight drops onto your little stick man. Word search is identical to the popular puzzle of the same name.

'Tip of the day' (which includes tips for the dictionary software itself plus snippets of English language trivia) and 'Word of the day' features round off this software nicely, and can be customised or turned off if desired.

For the small minority who need a thoroughly comprehensive treatise of the English language then the dataset of Collins Cobuild is probably not up to the job. Likewise, despite the crossword feature, the lexicon of this dictionary is insufficient for all but fairly basic puzzles. Average readers will appreciate the approachable way in which the Cobuild dictionary is written, and anyone learning English will find this style far superior to other, more traditional dictionaries.

Palmtop Software can't be faulted for the limitations of the dictionary data used, as anything more detailed would have needed too much idsk space. As it stands, they've successfully produced a well thought out and polished 'dictionary for the masses'.

Steve Clack

Collins English Dictionary

From: Major Psion dealers

Availability: Now

Runs on: All EPOC models

Price: £40 inc. VAT

Quality ★★★★½

Value ★★★½☆

Starting up:
BACKUPS

We all put it off, don't do it as often as we should, or even ignore the whole idea. Pete Sipple offers some practical guidance to help make the process a little easier...

Just about everyone who's ever owned a computer has had at least one disaster for which a backup would have saved the day. So, why are too many of us so lax in backing up our palmtops?

Why should I backup?

The reason should be obvious; we all know the dangers of *not* having a backup. Being too keen with the 'Delete file?' prompt must be favourite, or perhaps having software unexpectedly crashing before saving a vital document. We all know that backups *are* important, but surprisingly few of us have up-to-date copies of all our vital files.

But my Psion never crashes!

While Psion palmtops are usually very stable, backups aren't there just to help recover a lost file. What happens if your Psion is lost or stolen? Or if it goes belly-up, losing all data and needing repair? The hardware is replaceable, but not the data—unless you have a good backup, kept somewhere safe.

Are there different sorts of backups?

Backups are often misunderstood. Some view 'backing up' as a long, tedious process that ties up a machine while copying loads of unnecessary files. That's at least partly true, but a backup can also be nothing more than a safety copy of a couple of vital files. For example, the one file I'd be totally lost without is the Contacts database that I've been adding to for several years. It's not a huge file and takes only a few seconds to copy to my PC, whereas a full backup of my Series 5mx from scratch can take 10-15 minutes.

What should I backup?

Ideally everything. If your machine were to vanish or break beyond repair, a full backup of all files could get a new machine up and running with exactly the same documents, software and preferences. Taking full backups can be tedious (though usually only the very first time it's done), but they are an excellent idea. At the very least, you should have a backup of your vital files, e.g. your Agenda, or anything that you've been working on and don't want to have to re-do ever again, or a Data file that contains information that you'd be hard pushed to replace.

I'm convinced. How should I back up?

There are four basic ways to back up:

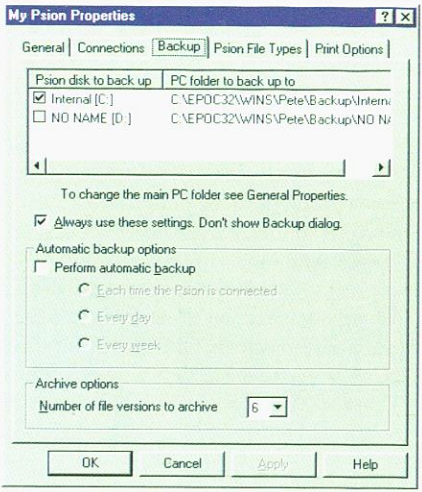
1. Backing up to a desktop computer
2. Backup up to an SSD or CompactFlash memory disk
3. Backing up to a floppy disk using a Cyclone
4. Hard copy(!)

Backing up to a PC

If you've got access to a PC and have a working version of PsiWin installed then this is probably the most painless way of backup up your data.

If you have a Psion machine that's less than a couple of years old, you'll almost certainly be using PsiWin version 2 or later. We'll take a brief look at PsiWin v1, as well as some other backup software, later in this article. For the moment, let's look at how to start a backup with PsiWin 2:

- Turn your palmtop on and connect it to your PC with the supplied cable. Enable the remote link from the System screen (using [Psion]+[L] or [Ctrl]+[L], depending on which generation of Psion you own).
- Double-click on the PC's 'Backup Psion' icon.
- You can now select what you want to backup: almost certainly your 'Internal' disk, and probably any CF or SSD cards you have plugged into your palmtop.
- By default, your files will be backed up into a folder called "Backup", in whichever root directory you specified when you installed PsiWin (usually '\Psion'). In practice, it doesn't matter where you back up your files on your PC, as long as you know where to find them again afterwards.



Setting up your backup preferences

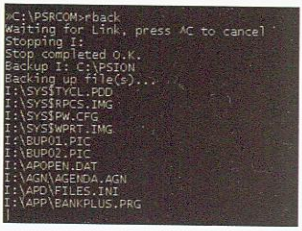
- Using the 'Options' screens, you can specify whether you want to automatically take backups or not. Selecting 'automatic' does mean that you can forget about backups to some extent, but it relies on you having your Psion connected regularly. It can also slow both machines down if you're forced to take a backup when you don't want to.
- There is an option to specify how many file versions you want to keep. For documents that change frequently and if you have room on your hard disk, this gives you the option of holding up to six previous versions of each.
- You should now be ready to start your backup. Click on 'Backup' to proceed.

Your first backup may take some time, as it will be copying all files from the drive(s) you've specified. You might want to plug your Psion into mains power for the duration. Fortunately, only the first backup is a 'full' one, with subsequent backups being 'incremental'. In other words, you will then only

Non-Windows computers

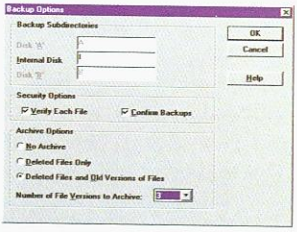
DOS

Anyone using a really old PC may wish to take a look at Psion's rather clunky RCOM package. This runs under DOS and is free. Machines with PC emulators may also be able to make use of this program, which is available from various online sources and can also be found in the \library\vault section of all Palmtop CDs. Documentation supplied with RCOM is basic, but should be enough to allow you to make a successful backup. Issue 10, p89 offers some useful tips on using RCOM.



Windows 3.1

PsiWin version 1 runs under Windows 3.1 (as well as Windows 95/98 if you really want to) and allows for backups in a similar way to PsiWin 2. You can specify which drives to backup, and ask PsiWin to 'verify' that the files copied correctly. As with PsiWin 2, you can specify how many archive copies of altered files you wish to keep. Originally commercial software, PsiWin 1 has now been made freely available in the 'Year 2000' section of *www.psion.com* .

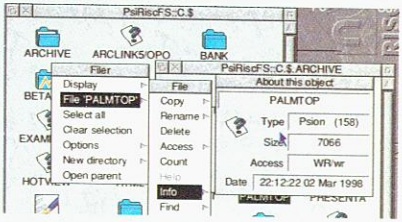


Apple Macintosh

For information on connecting a Psion to your Mac, see our article on page 77. Essentially, both PsiMac for Series 3 machines and MacConnect for EPOC models both have backup systems that operate in a similar way to PsiWin.

Acorn

ArcLink and PsiRisc are likely to be your best option. See issue 18, p54 for full details, as well as our connectivity article back in issue 11.



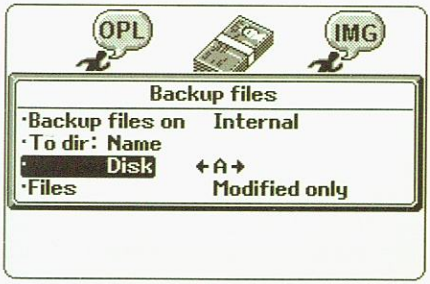
Backing up a Series 3 to SSD

be copying over files that have changed since the previous backup.

Backing up to a CF or SSD

If you don't have access to a desktop computer then using a plug-in memory pack is your best bet.

Series 3 family - you have the choice of flash or RAM SSDs. When taking backups, it's best to stay clear of the RAM variant. This type of storage device is powered by a small battery which needs replacing after a year



Backing up a Siena to an SSD drive

or so. Normally, it's less of a problem if the pack is inside your Series 3, as it then draws power from the Psion's AA batteries instead, but for a backup to be effective you *really* need to keep the SSD safely at home, and not with the machine. Therefore always go for the Flash SSD option. If you have a copy of issue 11, you may like to read 'A question of memory' for full details on SSD storage.

Siena - this small Psion doesn't have a built-in SSD drive, but an external unit was produced—though they may be hard to find nowadays. See issue 10, p28 for a full review.

Series 5 or other EPOC model - the newer Psion (and compatible) machines make use of CompactFlash (CF) technology. These packs are relatively inexpensive and easy to obtain. For full details on CFs, read Nigel Wright's article in issue 24, p49.

On a Series 3 or Siena, you can back up all your files to SSD using the 'Backup files' command from the System screen. You have the usual option to back up all files, or just the ones that have changed since the last session. Alternatively, you can back up individual files by just highlighting them from the System screen and using [Psion]+[C] to manually copy them across.

On newer (EPOC) machines, there is no 'Backup' command. Instead, with the top folder of your Internal disk showing on the System screen, use [Ctrl]+[A] to select all files and folders. Use [Ctrl]+[C] to copy your selections, then change to the 'D' drive and paste the files into your CF using [Ctrl]+[V].

When backing up to a memory disk, remember to close down all of your applications and files first, as they cannot be copied if they are in use. Here a utility such as JBStopGo can be invaluable. This shuts down all files prior to the backup and opens them again afterwards (see the software boxout later in this article).

Backing up to floppy disk with a Cyclone disk drive

Purple Software's Cyclone floppy disk drive (mentioned on page 83 of this issue) can also be an answer to effective backups. With a Cyclone, you can back up your Series 3 or

Siena onto standard 3½" floppy disks, each storing 1.44MB and costing only a few pence each. The unit isn't particularly small, but it does allow you to copy files onto floppy disks for safekeeping. The Cyclone drive is available for around £100 from Psion retailers. For a full review of the Cyclone, see issue 15, p34.

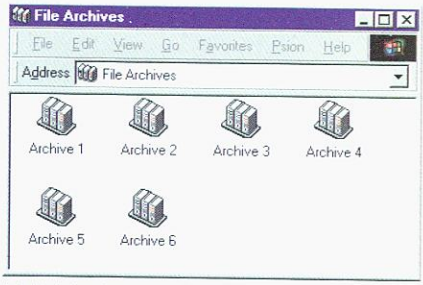
A third party utility, Bcyclone, can help make these backups easier. See the software boxout later in this article for details.

Hard copies

If you don't have access to a desktop computer or Cyclone drive, the memory pack solution is a good option. As a last resort a paper copy of your data is better than nothing, though only just. Using a parallel printer lead (see issue 11, p19), you can plug into a standard printer and make hard copies of your address book, diary and other important files. If your Psion has an infrared port and you have access to an IrDA compatible printer, you may be able to print without the need for a cable at all. With a paper copy, at least you know you won't lose information—but should the worst happen, you'll of course be stuck with the job of typing everything in again from scratch.

How often should I backup my data?

Backups *do* take time, but it's important to remember to take them regularly. In issue 22's Mailbox, Anthony Napier made a simple but excellent suggestion—setting Agenda to remind you to take a backup. Some users are fanatical about backups and take them daily, others weekly or monthly. Personally, I back up around twice a week onto PC, and then backup my PC around once a month. Not enough, I know...

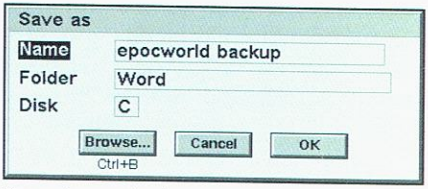


Multiple backups with PsiWin

Any useful hints?

The law of averages means that one day you'll lose something that you really didn't want to. As I mentioned above, just backing up your Agenda and address book Data file can save you a lot of heartache. On the EPOC Release 5 (ER5) machines (5mx, MC218, Revo, etc.), your Contacts database hides itself in the \System\Data folder, as a file called contacts.cdb. Don't forget to include this in your backup.

If you don't have the chance to connect to a PC for a backup, sometimes just saving a file under a different name can get you out of a fix. If you're working on a long document, every now and then take time to use the 'Save As' command, using a different name each time (e.g. 'doc1', 'doc2', etc.) This way, you'll have a copy that you can revert to if you make a mistake and delete something you shouldn't, or in the unlikely event of a crash or battery failure.

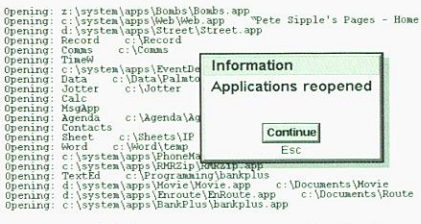


'Save as' saves the day

Other Backup utilities

JBBackup - this small Series 3 program from John Boyce closes down all open applications and transfers all altered files to your PC, reopening all applications automatically on completion of the backup - *www.cix.co.uk/~jbsoft*

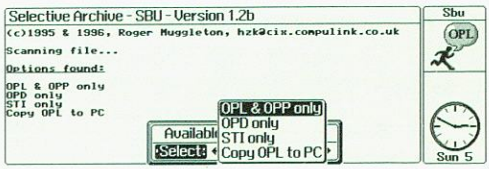
JB5StopGo - Also from John Boyce, versions of this utility are available for both Series 3 and Series 5 families. However you choose to back up, it's useful to shut all applications and files down before starting the process. This program automatically closes or re-opens everything according to whether the PC link is running or not. If closing files then the serial link is turned on, otherwise the link is switched off - *www.cix.co.uk/~jbsoft*



Bcyclone - written by Zeljko Mikulec of Germany, this utility backs up the contents of your Series 3's Internal, A or B drives onto floppy disks via a Cyclone drive. You are prompted to insert disks at the appropriate moments and applications are opened/closed as required. Available from the usual shareware sources.

IRBackup - Jim Pollock's IRBackup and IRRestore utilities allow you to back up and restore files between your Series 3/Siena and desktop via infrared. The PC part of the program is a DOS application, which also creates a log file of transfers and uses error checking throughout. A cable-free way of taking a quick backup - *www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Lakes/3947*

SBU - Selective Backup, by Roger Muggleton, allows you to back up certain file types only—perhaps the ones that are most likely to change. Also for the Series 3 family, this program is free and can be used in conjunction with JBStopGo to ensure the files are closed before the backup. Available from the usual shareware sources.



PsiZip / RMRZip - Serge Shestopalov's PsiZip for the Series 3/Siena family and RMRZip for the Series 5 are not backup programs in themselves, but can be a useful tool to keep your data archived and safe. Files are compressed in each archive, so you can save a copy of an important document without taking up too much space. See issue 12, p28 and issue 17, p51 for more details - *www.rmrsoft.com*

Are my backups safe?

The only way to be 100 percent safe is to take multiple backups, keeping them in different places. Taking a copy of your vital files from home to work or vice-versa means that you still have a safe backup in the event of fire, flood or other catastrophe.

An article of this type wouldn't be complete without relating an anecdote about a backup disaster. The story relates to a colleague of mine, who routinely backs up with PsiWin. His home PC contained a couple of full backups of his Series 5 and all was fine until he received a new version of PsiWin. Rather than doing a Control Panel 'Add/remove' of the old version of PsiWin, he deleted the entire directory tree prior to installing the new version. His backed up data was in a subdirectory of PsiWin and so all of his copies were lost. As for the data on the machine itself? His Series 5 had been left in a car glove box on a cold winter night. The backup battery had already been reporting itself as 'low' for some time and the cold tempereature killed what was left of the main batteries. Upon pressing the 'On' key, a mournful beep sounded and a complete lack of data was revealed. If only he'd taken a backup of his PC backup. You can never have too many backups. Never. Preferably stored in as many places as possible!

And finally?

Stephen Murgan is a man who's been caught out with backups in the past. Read his Musings in issue 8, p88, as well as issue 20, p104.

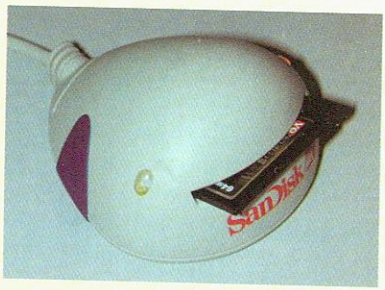
With all backups, it's mostly a matter of common sense and being prepared. Pay heed to the horror stories and urban myths. Play safe, and take a backup. You won't regret it.

CompactFlash readers

If you're a big user of CF disks, then you may want to invest in a CompactFlash reader. There are various types of these small desktop drives on the market, most of which plug into your PC's parallel or USB port. Some take batteries, but most get their power directly from the PC. After connecting the device to your PC and installing the driver software, you can insert a CF into the unit and exchange data with your PC.

CF readers have the advantages of speed and convenience, though of course they don't help in backing up your internal disk. For the purpose of this article we used a SanDisk ImageMate connected to a Pentium III's USB port, and were able to transfer 15MB of data from a 32MB CF disk in just over 30 seconds, compared with around 15 minutes via a standard PsiWin connection.

CF readers are available from computer stockists and typically cost under £50.



Adding to Agenda

A comprehensive roundup of useful add-ons for both Series 3 and Series 5 Agendas

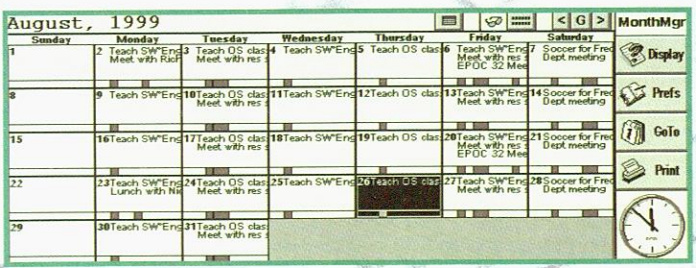
by Andy Nott

Although Agenda on both Series 3 and EPOC machines is a comprehensive application with a user-friendly interface, there remains one notable omission from all versions—a 'month' view. Later models in both Series 3 and Series 5 ranges added a useful 'Busy' view, but original Series 5 and Series 3a users are stuck with the standard Day, Week and Year views. Help is at hand though, from a number of third party programs that either add those missing views or offer other useful Agenda-related features. Here's a roundup of them all. We've included utilities for the Series 5/EPOC range in the main body of the article, with Series 3 programs summarised on page 53.

MonthMgr

MonthMgr is billed as "The Agenda view that Psion forgot", interfacing well with the built-in application and displaying items in a pleasant-looking month view. Each day slot of this view is annotated with as many items as will fit, with the added bonus of a day view for those quickly wishing to see all the items in a 24 hour period. All appointments (with start and end times), events and anniversaries appear as specified in Agenda itself. Unfortunately, all views are read-only, so you can't enter information directly into MonthMgr.

It's possible to display and print events, anniversaries and appointments selectively, with a neat little toolbar at the top of the calendar view to give one-tap access to this feature, as well as a button which offers instant access to your main Agenda file. The ability to filter items—when any (or all) of the relevant buttons



MonthMgr with 'busy' view turned on

are depressed—is an important feature of MonthMgr, as trying to display your entire Agenda in month-at-a-time format is understandably quite difficult using the Series 5's 13cm x 5cm display! The program also has the ability to 'wrap' the text entries in each box, with a dedicated button for easy access to this feature. You can also search for an entry using either a keyword, symbol or time interval.

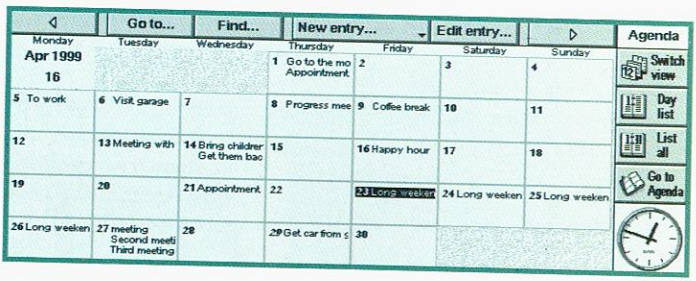
The MonthMgr week starts on Monday and it is not possible to reconfigure this, which is rather disappointing to those of us whose week commences on Sunday.

BusyView

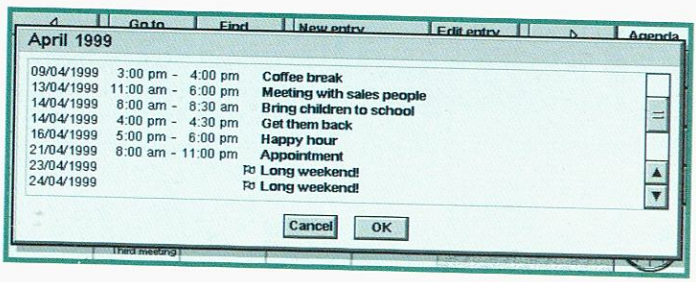
Similar in function to MonthMgr, BusyView is described as a "Fast 4-week Agenda viewer". It goes a step further than MonthMgr by adding three new views on your Agenda files: 'busy', 'calendar' and 'list'. The data's also 'live', in the sense that you can add and edit entries from within the first two modes, without the need to constantly return to the main Agenda file.

The program opens very quickly, partly because it was written using C++ rather than OPL, and the toolbar enables easy switching between the available views. The busy view is very useful and is similar in appearance to its counterpart on the Series 3c and 5mx. Filled time slots are represented as shaded boxes, allowing you to see at a glance what's coming up. The calendar view gives an overall view of the month, showing entries as set in the preferences dialogs. As with MonthMgr, a filtering option allows you to predetermine which entries are to be displayed: Events, To-dos, Anniversaries and both Timed or Untimed appointments. Finally, the list view is used as a read-only pop-up page.

BusyView is a pleasure to use, with my only major criticism being its inability to print.



BusyView in calendar view


April 1999
09/04/1999 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm Coffee break
13/04/1999 11:00 am - 6:00 pm Meeting with sales people
14/04/1999 8:00 am - 8:30 am Bring children to school
14/04/1999 4:00 pm - 4:30 pm Get them back
16/04/1999 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm Happy hour
21/04/1999 8:00 am - 11:00 pm Appointment
23/04/1999 Long weekend!
24/04/1999 Long weekend!
Cancel
OK

BusyView showing one of its list dialogs

Series 3 Agenda action

Agenda Dump - extracts data from Agenda files in a form suitable for processing by another computer or program. The output may be sent to screen (for checking), file, printer, serial (serial printer or other device) or Data file (for further manipulation).

Agnmerge (v) - will merge multiple Agendas into a single file. During the process it will optionally delete memos, alarms or crossed out entries, change the display occurrence of repeating entries, omit entries that are outside a date range, prefix all or part of the file name to each entry from that Agenda, or change entry styles.

App - gives basic password protection for Agenda files. Use it by removing the standard Agenda icon from the system screen and installing the App icon instead. Though it looks identical and displays the same file list, it's actually a password-enabled launcher for the real Agenda.

Busyview - as with the EPOC version, this is an extension for the built-in Agenda, adding an extra view. It shows when you are busy, four weeks at a time. Written in C, for improved speed.

Csv2agn - converts the CSV (comma separated value) file generated by Microsoft Project (on the PC) into an Agenda file. All entries are converted as untimed entries for the appropriate day. Those that extend across multiple days are converted as entries that repeat on weekdays.

Event Convert - reformats the 'List' view of Agenda into a full page, one month calendar. It works by taking a text file generated from Agenda and reformatting the events into a calendar 'template' file. This can then be opened by Sheet and printed in landscape orientation to any supported printer, in any supported font.

HOL - is designed to calculate holidays for many different countries and cultures and then write them to your Agenda. A holiday definition file is needed for each one, then you simply select which configured holidays to use and which years to calculate for.

JAM - this older utility also gives a Month view. To maximise speed there's a 'snapshot' facility to instantaneously display the JAM window as it appeared when last launched, so you can process an Agenda file, quit JAM, then display the JAM window later without the need for reprocessing.

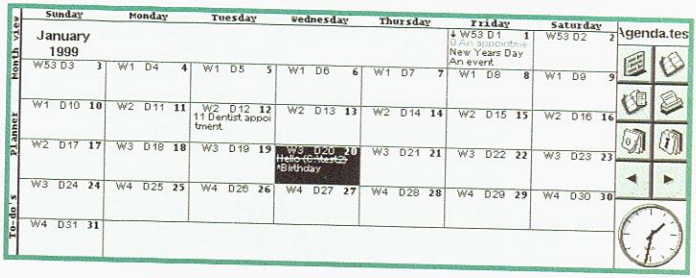
Memofind - written by one of the architects of the Series 3 operating system, Memofind lets you search through all memos attached to Agenda entries. For memos with a standard personal password, there's an option to specify a 'global' decrypting password in the search dialog.

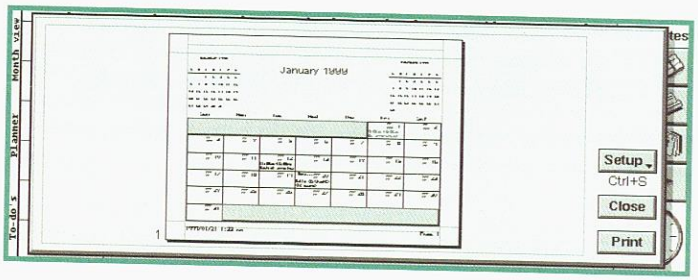
MonthVu - one of the most registered Series 3 programs of all time, MonthVu adds a month-at-a-glance view, showing graphical timelines and automatically searching for free time slots.

PCAgenda - a Windows 95/98 Personal Information Manager (PIM) that loads and saves Agenda files. All data can be added, edited and deleted, apart from attached memos. Supports calendar printing and PC alarms.

Note: all references to 'Series 3' in this article are, as usual, a shorthand for Series 3a,3c or 3mx. The earlier Series 3 'classic' used a slightly different file format and none of these programs will work.

RMRMonth in month view...





...and showing off its impressive graphical printing facility

RMRMonth

As with BusyView, because the program gets to grips with the existing Agenda file format it's possible to add, delete and modify entries directly in RMRMonth. And again you have the option to filter events, anniversaries and appointments. A hierarchically-presented To-do list is an added bonus and as with the previous applications there's a 'busy' view, making it possible to see at a glance which time slots have already been allocated throughout the month.

Unique to RMRMonth is comprehensive printing support for each view and entry type. US and European week styles are also catered for, so it's possible to make Sunday the beginning of the week. There's also a very comprehensive help file that caters well for those who are less technically minded. On the negative side, RMRMonth can be somewhat slow to open.

Extra, extra

There are plenty of other Agenda-related utilities for the Series 5, as summarised below. All of the following can be found on the *Palmtop* CD or from the usual shareware sources.

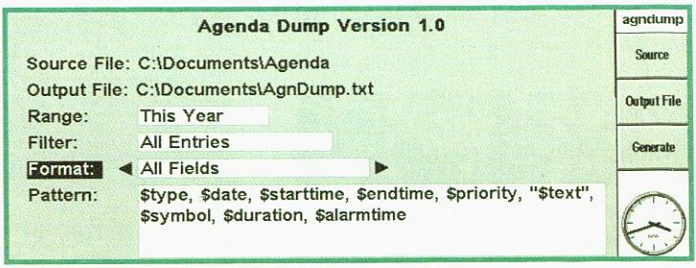
AgnDump

This creates an ASCII text file from Agenda, dumping the data as directed by filters and a customisable template. You can specify input and output files, a range of dates, the type of Agenda entry and the template through which to write each entry. The latter is a text string containing characters and variable specifications that represent components of an Agenda file entry.

Hol5

This utility calculates public holidays from definition files and writes the result to a specified Agenda file. The default distribution of Hol5 contains a set of holiday definition files for many different countries, regions and religions.

Agenda Dump—preparing to go to work



Availability

All the programs in this article are available from the usual shareware sources, plus:

Series 5 / EPOC

MonthMgr - *www.kabestin.com* , $17 to register

BusyView - *ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/platodva/psion.htm* , $25 to register

RMRMonth - *www.rmrsoft.com* , $20 to register

AgnDump - *www.kabestin.com*

Hol5 - *www.planetepoc.com/hosted/jldamnet*

JotPad - *www.btinternet.com/~colin.shearing* , £6 to register

To3 - *www.btinternet.com/~colin.shearing*

vMEMO - *members.xoom.com/gbpsionzone/psion.htm*

Today - *www.shoresystems.net/palmtime*

Plan - *www.twiddlebit.com* , £15 to register

Notepad - *www.pelicansoft.com* , commercial

Series 3

Agenda Dump - *www.cix.co.uk/~ropewalk/psion*

Agnmerge - *www.kurzbyrn.demon.co.uk/psion.htm*

App - *www.pelicansoft.com*

BusyView - *ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/platodva/psion.htm* , $25 to register

Csv2Agn - *www.kurzbyrn.demon.co.uk/psion.htm*

Event Convert - all Palmtop CDs

Hol - *decus.se/~gripenol/hol.html*

JAM - all Palmtop CDs, $20 to register

Memofind - *3lib.ukonline.co.uk/find/memofind.zip*

MonthVu - *www.gorilla-haven.org/pimlico* , $20 to register

PCAgenda - *www.maison.demon.co.uk*

Each file is plain text and can be adapted to specific use in any text editor.

JotPad

This is a 'jotter pad' that also makes use of the built-in Agenda. JotPad entries can be made as any of Agenda's standard entry types, including 'hyperlinking' each entry to an existing or new file. The utility can also store commonly used phrases for easy insertion. A reminder facility can display entries once each day, after a selected time.

To3

This claims to convert a Series 5 Agenda file to Series 3 format. Both dated and undated entry types are supported.

Vmemo I

Billed as "A reminder program with a difference". As with JotPad, this integrates itself directly with Agenda. Everything is handled from a single interface, from Agenda entries to voice memos and email messages.

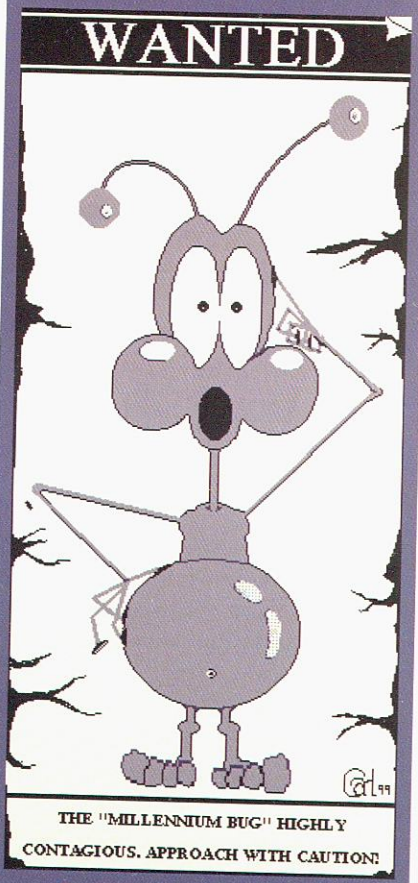
Today

Today switches to your Agenda once a day, the first time you open your Series 5. It will then wait in the background until the following day. You can also set a specific date for the next occurrence, in case you don't want to be bothered for the weekend or during a holiday.

In addition to the above, many EPOC applications are now able to read and write to standard Agenda files. Most notably, Twiddlebit's shareware Plan and the commercial Notepad from Pelican Software.

Agenda will never be the same again!

Psion ART



Created by Carl Reader using Series 5 Sketch

Living with the Ericsson MC218

John Woodthorpe takes a long-term look at telecommunication giant Ericsson's answer to the Psion Series 5mx—the EPOC-driven MC218

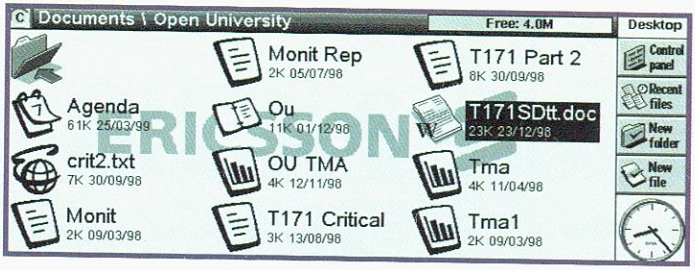
At first glance the Ericsson MC218 appears to be an almost exact clone of the Psion 5mx, with a different colour casing. In practice there a number of small hardware differences between the two machines, together with some rather more significant distinctions in the built-in software.

There are probably two potential customer types for the Ericsson MC218: Psion owners who want to upgrade to the Series 5mx but feel the MC218 might offer something extra, and people who need a palmtop that's a good match for their existing Ericsson GSM phone. The fact that 'MC' stands for 'Mobile Companion' probably shows where Ericsson expect their sales to come from. As well as the palmtop itself and a filofax-like 'wraparound' nylon case, you also get the DI27 clip-on infrared modem to use with Ericsson's 600 or 700 series phones. If you have a newer phone such as the T28, there's also a voucher to swap the DI27 for a DI28.

Just another 5mx?

The MC218's keyboard is subtly different from the familiar Series 5/5mx, in ways both welcome and inexplicable. One really good feature is all the accented characters. If you want to enter ñ, you just press [Fn]+[n], and Å is [Fn]+[Shift]+[p]. There are inevitably some that can't be entered so easily, such as diphthongs and ligatures, where you have to remember the control code sequence or use the 'Insert | Special character...' menu or shortcut, but you can manage very well on the whole with just those on the keyboard. This is a sensible 'international' innovation that I feel Psion would do well to mimic.

On the downside, the extra characters on the numeric keys are different to those on any other keyboard I've ever used! Almost every key does *three* things, depending on whether it is pressed on its own, or in conjunction with [Fn] or [Shift]—but *why* put the parentheses on the [8] and [9] keys when all other keyboards have them on the [9] and [0] keys? The currency keystrokes for £ and $ are similarly moved. For those already accustomed

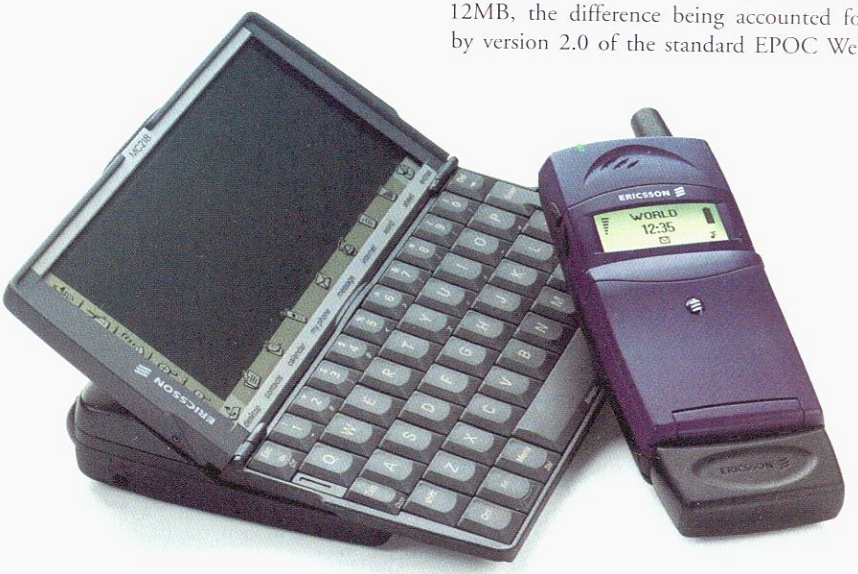


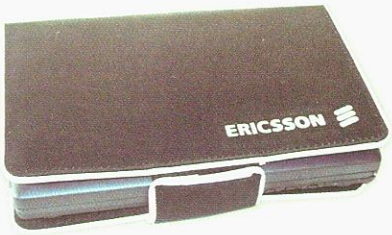
Some newly-styled icons on the MC218 System screen

to a Series 5, the MC218 calculator keys have moved a couple of positions to the left. However, the original Series 5 shortcuts (e.g. where you press the [Y] key for 'multiply' in Calc) still apply. So to multiply two numbers on the MC218 you either press [Fn]+[R] or the [Y] key (which is labelled '+').

The carrying case supplied with the MC218 is made of dark blue nylon fabric with white piping and looks very smart. There's even an elasticated pocket to hold the modem when not attached to a phone. It's merely a wrap-around case though, so you have to use the (supplied) Velcro patches to hold the machine in place. Remove the MC218 from the case to use it on a table, and you'll find that the patches prevent the rubber feet from making contact with the flat surface. This means it slides around and can tip up when you press the spacebar. I've now removed the Velcro strips and gone back to a Palm-Tec hard case, keeping the phone in my jacket pocket and the modem in an old 35mm film canister.

The MC218 system ROM has been increased from the 10MB of the Series 5mx to a full 12MB, the difference being accounted for by version 2.0 of the standard EPOC Web





browser, several very useful example document files, and new applications such as My Phone and the very useful Postcard. Minor additions include Ericsson 'wallpaper' and an extra alarm tone, a subdued 'ding ding'—of most use as an unobtrusive alarm while in a meeting.

There's a certain 'scribbled' style to the silk-screen and on-screen icons that I find quite attractive. Agenda has been renamed 'Calendar', Email to 'Message' and Web to 'Internet', more I suspect just to be different than for any logical linguistic reason.

All of the standard built-in software of the 5mx is present on the MC218, so refer to our in-depth 5mx review in issue 24 if you're not already familiar with it. There are, however, some changes to the way certain programs are accessed...

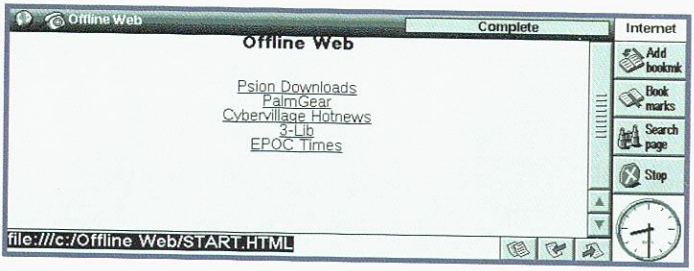
Jotter is provided in ROM but is strangely absent from the silk-screen area. I've never seen much point to Jotter, as Data can do the same thing so much better (including using the wonderful 'Memo' field for notes of virtually unlimited length). However, if you're going to provide a quick way of entering notes, wouldn't it make sense to have it easily available from the application bar? I'd argue that Jotter or Data are more likely to be used than 'My Phone' and 'Internet', even for the most ardent mobile phone user, and hence could make a better case for one of the coveted spots on the silk-screen region beneath the screen. Ericsson disagree with me, but then they probably want to make a point of promoting the advanced degree of integration with Ericsson mobile phones.

EPOC Connect vs PsiWin

Ericsson's EPOC Connect is a re-badged version of Symbian's standard PC connectivity software. Installing it on the same machine as PsiWin isn't a good idea as the two programs tend to overwrite parts of each other. Most users won't have access to different incarnations of EPOC Connect and PsiWin, but the MC218 increases the chance of that happening. If a Series 3 user moves to an MC218, they'll find that Ericsson's EPOC Connect takes an interesting attitude to the Series 3 range. It will recognise the palmtop and copy and convert files, but it won't convert them to the MC218's EPOC formats, just to standard PC file types. In other words, there's no simple way of moving Series 3 files to the MC218 in one go. Of course, Word, Data and Sheet files can always be handled using an intermediate PC format, but Agenda files are a dead end. A Series 3 user moving to the MC218 should probably install the free PsiWin 2.1 (as supplied on *Palmtop* CDs), convert the files, transfer them to the MC218, de-install PsiWin and then finally install Ericsson's EPOC Connect.

EPOC Connect is generally better mannered than PsiWin as it doesn't 'spray' icons all over the PC desktop, merely leaving a single, tasteful 'My Ericsson' icon. Despite being identified as version 1.0, it seems functionally identical to PsiWin 2.3 (see issue 25, p35).

The first release CD supplied with the MC218 includes two EPOC applications: an attractive rolling demo of the MC218's capabilities, and the WAP browser. Unlike the 5mx, there's no Java engine on the CD, and no collec-



Offline Web's initial screen on the MC218

tion of demonstration versions of games and other applications. Funnily enough, Java *was* available from the Ericsson Mobile Internet web site (*mobileinternet.ericsson.com*) for a few weeks and could be downloaded by entering a valid MC218 machine ID. Despite appearing to work, it didn't actually register itself as a plug-in in the web browser and is no longer available. The version on the PsiWin 2.3 CD also seems to work, but only a 5mx owner would have access to that.

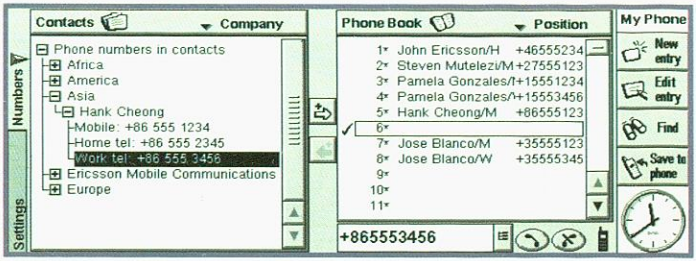
Other free downloads on the same web site include the Offline Web and My Pocket applications, PC email synchronisation, the IMAP4 email extension, an updated WAP browser and an Internet Setup Wizard. Some of these are described as beta versions, and most have been updated a few times since the machine first appeared.

Offline Web and My Pocket

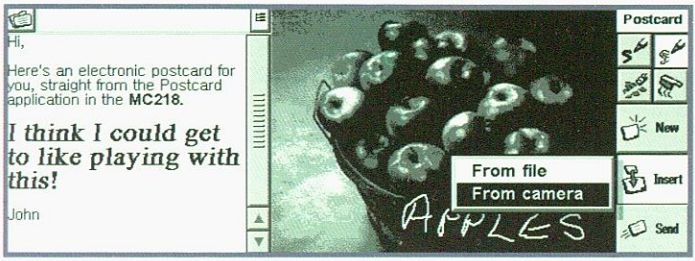
These are EPOC Connect extensions, written for Ericsson by Palmtop Software and an 8MB download from Ericsson's Mobile Internet site. They won't work with PsiWin or the Psion 5mx, by the way.

Offline Web uses a PC's Internet connection to download the content you want and then synchronise it with the MC218. It can be configured to download images if required, and to go to a particular link depth within a site or just to take the specified page. Although a good idea in principle, it has some severe limitations. One is that it only works with Internet Explorer version 4 or above (and only the Windows versions, at that). Another is that it really struggles with framed sites, often getting severely confused. Another problem is the time everything takes: downloading five web sites, with only one of them going one link deeper than the 'home' page, took a huge 30 minutes, plus a further 10 minutes to synchronise them to the MC218. The main reason for this slowness is that it insists on creating a page saying "This link is not present locally!" for each link not downloaded. For sites that have lots of onward links this slows things unacceptably, turning my five sites with a mere eight pages between them into 620 pages in 467 folders and taking up 689K of internal memory! It's far quicker and easier to access the pages directly with the MC218 and mobile phone.

My Pocket, on the other hand, is superb. You simply create links ('bindings') from files on the MC218 to equivalents on the PC (or vice versa) and they will then be synchronised and converted whenever you want. This can be done manually, configured to happen daily, or each time the palmtop is connected. It only synchronises files that have been changed and is an excellent mechanism to allow you to work on documents on one machine at a time, while still keeping everything up to date.



The MC218's useful 'My Phone' utility in use with an Ericsson mobile phone



Wish you were here? Composing a Postcard

My Phone

This is a basic management utility for Ericsson phones, allowing you to access the phone settings, memories, edit ring tones and so on. It isn't as powerful as SG Software's shareware PhoneMan (reviewed in issue 21), and that can be used instead if you prefer.

Postcard

For me, Postcard is the most useful new application. It allows you to create an email message with the text part being an HTML file in which you can use bold, italics and other rich text, and with an accompanying picture. This can be a Sketch or an image from a digital camera. If you have a camera that saves images as JPEGs and uses the IrTran-P v1.0 protocol, you can beam files directly into the Postcard application. Models that work include the JVC GC-S1, Sharp VE-LC25 and Casio QV 7000SX. If your camera doesn't support the required protocol but uses a CF card, you can always transfer pictures by putting the card directly into the MC218. While composing the message, you can write or draw on the picture to annotate it as necessary.

Consequently it can be used to convert Sketch files to a platform-independent format, giving you an email alternative to a faxed diagram. You could do something similar by writing the HTML manually and using the shareware MBMView utility to turn Sketch files into JPEG or GIF images, but Postcard does it all transparently.

WAP browser

I'd really hoped to talk in more detail about the 'Mobile Internet' WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) browser. WAP is something in which Ericsson have been a prime mover, being designed to serve up modified web sites in a format suitable for the screen size and transfer speeds of mobile phones. It needs the phone network to be WAP-enabled however, and at the time of writing none of the UK

networks are. My own phone is on the Vodafone network and they will soon be launching their own ISP with a WAP gateway. Thus I hope to report more on this in a future issue.

Conclusions

We've been hearing for a while that Bluetooth is coming. This will allow devices like PDAs, mobile phones and handheld OCR devices to communicate with each other and with desktop machines by radio, as long as they are within a few feet of each other. When that happens, line-of-sight infrared links will probably be redundant and we will be able to pick up email while the phone is still in a briefcase or pocket. The other possibility is that the phone itself will develop and make the palmtop redundant, much like the sophisticated Ericsson R380, due to appear sometime next year.

At the moment though, infrared is still the way to go for truly wireless links, and the Ericsson MC218 palmtop takes advantage of that more than any other EPOC device. There are alternative ways of achieving much the same sort of functionality by using the Series 5 or 5mx with any infrared-enabled phone. But the MC218 has several advantages, not least of which is the fact that it only costs an extra £50 (at around £440), but includes an infrared modem worth about £90. If that doesn't attract you, look at the benefits of My Pocket (for Windows users) and the neat Postcard application. Once you get used to the slightly frustrating keyboard layout, I think it's a real contender.

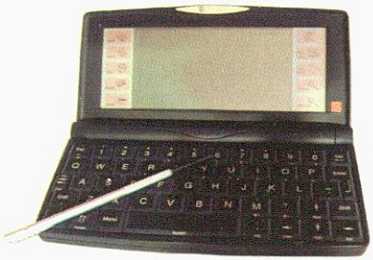
Are they serious?

So, how serious are Ericsson about the MC218? Well, as I write this I'm sitting on a KLM flight from Amsterdam to Japan, and the in-flight magazine has a full-page ad for the MC218. It shows someone on a motorcycle travelling through a desert landscape with the caption "Send me an e-mail. I'm at the office". The other text simply points out that the MC218 is no bigger than your hand but can email, fax and connect to the web when used with your Ericsson mobile phone. The closing slogan is "Make yourself heard".

This seems to be their focus—owners of Ericsson phones who don't want to travel with a laptop, but *do* want to stay in touch with the rest of the company. Depending on your point of view, the MC218 is either just a re-badged Psion Series 5mx with some extra software or a step forward in moving EPOC devices into the hands of corporate customers. It may be that the level of success of the MC218 as a business tool will be significant in the future development of EPOC, at least until smartphone designs appear on the market from 2000 onwards. In that context, the thoughts of the average Psion buyer probably aren't that important—it's the corporate customers that will be the key to unlocking a larger market and increasing the use of EPOC machines.

Living with the Oregon Osaris

Pete Sipple takes a long-term look at Oregon Scientific's EPOC handheld, the Osaris

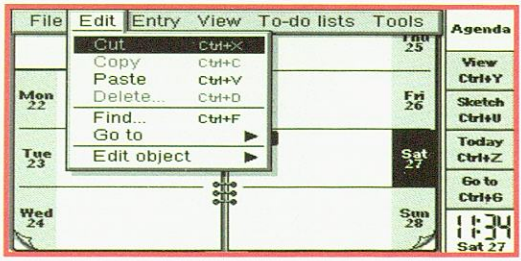


In issue 24 we looked at a preview version of Oregon Scientific's Osaris, the first 'clone' machine from a non-Symbian partner. The machine is now widely available and, as promised, we have spent several weeks living with the final production model...

Hardware

Comparing the pre-production machine with the retail version shows little difference: the blue parts of the two tone blue/silver case are now in a darker, almost black shade and the Oregon Scientific badge on the front is now in shiny chrome effect rather than the original, classier looking, brushed aluminium finish. The flimsy stylus has undergone a slight colour change (a black tip with a silver body), but it's still a little too bendy (a 'feature' cunningly referred to as "pressure sensitive" in their literature!) The stylus resides in a slot on the left-hand side of the machine, so right-handed users may find that they have to rotate and invert the machine to return the stylus to its home once the lid has been closed.

Concurring with our initial review, after continued use it's clear that the screen is the Osaris' biggest compromise. No changes



Agenda's week view—familiar screens, but squashed and distorted by the Osaris' non-square pixels

appear to have been made in the final release version, and a screen that is only half the pixel width (320 x 200) of the Series 5's does take a lot of getting used to, at least if you're already used to the Psion. When side-by-side with a 5mx, the screen appears to be noticeably darker, even with the backlight on. Apart from its smaller size, the non-square pixels used in the Osaris' display give everything a disconcerting, squashed appearance.

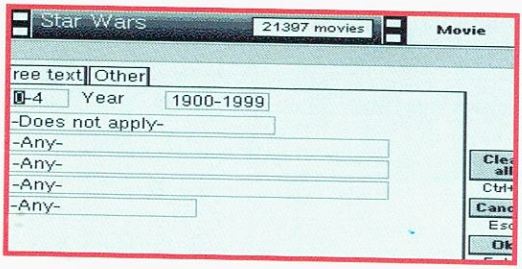
The keyboard is also as reported previously, with slightly less travel than the keys on the Series 5. It's all too easy not to hit the required key correctly, and I had to turn up the key-click sound to help confirm that keypresses were registering. Other oddities include a relatively small Enter key and some unusual character mapping, as with the Ericsson MC218. As an example, the '£' sign appears as [Shift]+[3] on my PC and Series 5 keyboards, but is [Fn]+[7] on the Osaris. Speech marks (") aren't where you expect them either, being mapped to [Fn]+[0] rather than [Shift]+[2]. The Euro symbol makes no appearance on the Osaris keyboard.

The bulky keyboard hinge mentioned in our last review does hold one secret. It has two positions: the Osaris can be used at an angle of either 120° or 170° (almost flat). The second position can help to get more overhead light onto the screen—handy given its less than ideal contrast. The hinge seems sturdier than the mechanism found on both the Series 3 and Series 5 families, with a simpler mechanism that may prove to be more reliable.

On-board software

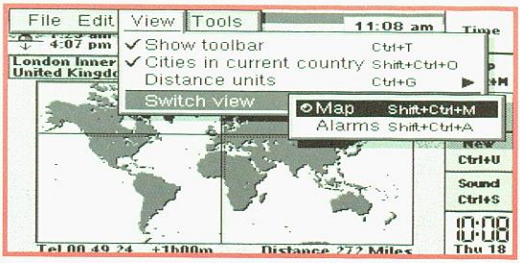
The final release of the Osaris contains EPOC Release 4, *not* ER5 as used in the 5mx, Series 7, MC218 and Revo. ER4 offers improvements over the *original* Series 5 (such as sorting in Sheet, outlining in Word and the inclusion of a Jotter) but excludes the Contacts application found on the 5mx, Ericsson MC218 and the Revo. Also missing is Record, as the Osaris has no microphone and no proper speaker, which probably explains why three of the alarm sounds have disappeared, leaving us with just 'Chimes', 'Rings' and 'Signal'.

The Osaris can be used for email and web access, though on the 4MB model this leaves



A standard Series 5 application misbehaving on the Osaris—an earlier version of Palmtop Software's Halliwell's Film Guide, showing the bottom right of the display truncated by the Osaris' smaller screen

It's a small world—those characteristic 'squashed' menus that you'll find on all Osaris applications



very little space for anything else. For most users the 8MB version is a better bet, though the CompactFlash slot can of course be used to expand storage space on either model.

Third-party software

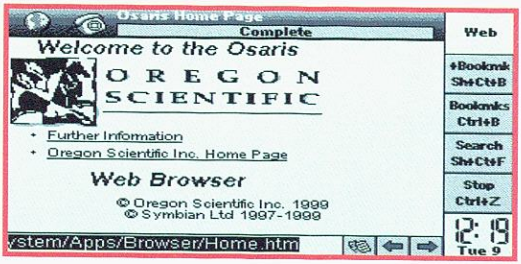
Users hoping to make the most of the mass of third party Psion software are likely to be disappointed. Almost all EPOC software written for the Series 5 family will run on an Osaris, but much of it is unusable due to the smaller screen 'cropping off' vital parts of the data. As a shareware author myself, I have tried to port my software to the Osaris but find the limitations quite restrictive.

That said, the larger commercial software houses have ported some of their titles to the Osaris screen, including Palmtop Software's Route Planner Millennium, Halliwell's Film Guide, Financial Calculator, Holy Bible, Portable Chef and the range of Harper Collins language dictionaries. Purple Software have also suitably modified their Allegro Classic, Chess Classic, Convert Pro and Navigator.

The amount of shareware support for the Osaris screen size is minimal at the moment and you are advised to check with a product's author or vendor if you are hoping to use it on an Osaris.

Documentation

Sadly, the Osaris comes with no paper manual—an omission likely to put novice users at a disadvantage. The machine comes with a very basic four page 'Quick Start Guide', which explains that the manual is on the enclosed CD. Indeed, the CD *does* contain documentation, in the form of 28



Surfing the web from the Osaris. The 8MB model is recommended if you plan to be doing a lot of this...

Microsoft Word files—without reading these you won't find out how to switch the machine on, turn on the remote link, or get the backup battery installed. If you don't have the means to open MS Word files then you're *completely* stuck. This is unsatisfactory, and something Oregon Scientific urgently needs to address if they hope to appeal to beginners.

The machine is supplied with an EPOC-Connect 4 CD, which contains the aforementioned manual, the OPL programming manual as a CHM (Compiled HTML Help) file and Message Suite.

The colourful packaging makes mention of the impressive sounding 'FineART GOGOPen handwriting recognition', but I could find no mention of this in the manual or on the Osaris itself, making it something of a mystery.

In a review of this kind I normally search through the Internet newsgroups to see if any users have reported problems with the new hardware. There seems to be remarkably little discussion of the Osaris, with the only online comment relating to a potential problem with the battery indicator, something that I also encountered. The machine would occasionally give a 'Batteries too low for backlight' message, even though the batteries had only been in place for a short time. Removing the batteries for a few seconds would fix the problem, indicating that the trouble actually lies with the low battery detection system. Oregon Scientific have acknowledged this problem, and are apparently looking into the matter.

Conclusions

Having used a Psion palmtop for several years, it's hard to be wholly impartial regarding such a 'different' machine. Significant compromises were clearly made in the design and construction in order to meet the Osaris' very competitive price point, but those without a Psion (or Ericsson) to compare against may be less put off by these. On the plus side, budget-sensitive users will spot that the Osaris offers a similar set of software applications for little more than *half* the price, which puts the Osaris' limitations into a more positive perspective.

With the appearance of the Revo, Psion now have their own cheaper alternative to the Series 5, although the Oregon Osaris offers a generally higher specification (including a backlight) and expandability via its Compact-Flash slot—something the Revo lacks. If new customers can be persuaded by built-in software features and can overlook the screen limitations, the Osaris may do well as a powerful pocket machine for those on a budget.

Contact: Oregon Scientific: 01628 826688
www.oregonscientific.co.uk

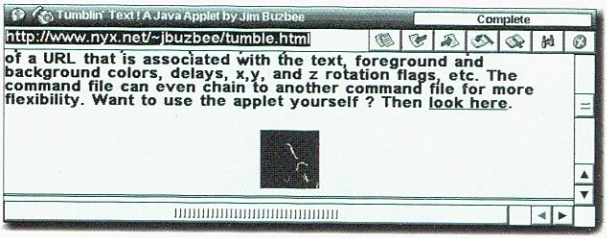
Java!

Part two of this guide takes you beyond the abstract and generic, explaining how Java applies to EPOC users

Things move quickly in the palmtop world—since part 1 of this article was written, the netBook, Series 7 and Revo have been released, all with EPOC Release 5 (ER5) and the ability to use Java. Symbian have announced that Motorola's forthcoming P1088 smart phone will be powered by Java, and others will follow soon.

What's provided is a Java Runtime Environment (JRE), version 1.1.4. This is a year or two behind the latest versions, but most Java programs will still work. Symbian have had to make a few compromises, though:

- The Series 5mx's screen is smaller than those of most other Java platforms, so things may appear squashed and large windows may extend off-screen. However, Symbian have thoughtfully provided a 'move mode', activated with [Ctrl]+[Space], letting you scroll them to see each part.
- Most EPOC platforms don't have a mouse, glide-pad or similar, so any programs which expect to be able to follow one when no buttons are pressed will be disappointed. You'll also have trouble using the right-hand mouse button(!) Very few programs rely on these, however.
- On other platforms, windows usually have a 'Close' button. EPOC windows don't, so you may not be able to remove certain windows or programs.
- Some widgets on screen look slightly different from the way they do on other platforms: for example, EPOC scroll bars have both scroll buttons together at one end, rather than having one at each end, and the menu bar isn't drawn within a window, but instead pops up when you press the [Menu] key or tap the command icon. They still function in exactly the same way though, so this shouldn't be a problem.
- Unless you've a colour-screened Series 7, programs will of course appear in glorious shades of grey.
- Most Java platforms provide a 'console' window, which shows things like error messages (some programs may use this for user input too). EPOC doesn't provide


Tumblin' Text ! A Java Applet by Jim Buzbee
Complete
http://www.nyx.net/~jbuzbee/tumble.html
of a URL that is associated with the text, foreground and background colors, delays, x,y, and z rotation flags, etc. The command file can even chain to another command file for more flexibility. Want to use the applet yourself ? Then look here.

Your very first Java applet?

one by default, but if you create a file in the \System\Java folder called 'console' (of any type), EPOC will use a separate full-screen console. Alternatively, if you create a folder called \Logs\Java\, the console output will be written there instead.

- (For programmers only) EPOC has no environment variables, so setting up the *classpath* (which tells the JVM where to find its **.class** files) is tricky. I'll come back to this later.

These are minor niggles, though—the majority of programs should work fine and Symbian are to be commended for a thorough job.

There's no Just-In-Time (JIT) compiler, which is a shame, as programs can be a little slow. However, speed is still comparable to programs written in OPL.

Installation

To install Java onto your EPOC machine, you'll need the Psion JVM.sis file, usually found on the accompanying CD and taking about 3MB of disk space when installed. You'll also need at least 2.5MB of system memory to run Java programs—often much more. Once installed, you should see something like 'EPOC Runtime for Java 1.05' shown in the 'Installed programs' list (found in the System screen's 'Control panel | Add/remove').

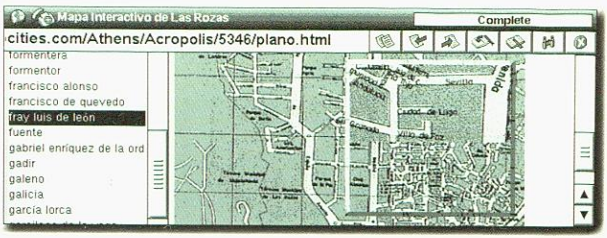
Running applets

Applets are usually stored on web pages, so to use them you'll need to install the web browser as well. This is also on the supplied CD and will take the best part of 1MB of disk space. Once installed, start it up and go to

Java standard file types

- **.java** files contain the source code as plain text. A program will probably comprise many of these, as each can contain only one (public) class.
- **.class** files contain the actual Java bytecode, ready to be run. The compiler generates one from each class defined in a **.java** file.
- **.jar** files (java archives) are compressed archives, just like .zip files—in fact, the format is compatible. They usually contain many **.class** files. Java can use the code directly from the **.jar** file without decompressing it into another file first, so these save on disk space as well as being faster to download.
- **.properties** files contain preferences and settings, in a similar way to .ini files.

Street mapping in Java!



'General Preferences...'—the 'Plug-ins' page should list 'HTML 3.2 Java Applet Plug-in'.

Go to a web page that contains an applet (e.g. *www.nyx.net/~jbuzbee/tumble.html* , a simple applet which shows some text tumbling in 3-D). The applet will be loaded along with the rest of the web page and then started automatically. Once the page is displayed, wait a few seconds for the 'Applet loaded' and 'Applet started' messages, then scroll down and just below the text you should see some action. You're looking at your first Java applet!

Running applications

Applications are stand-alone programs, so they aren't run from the web browser.

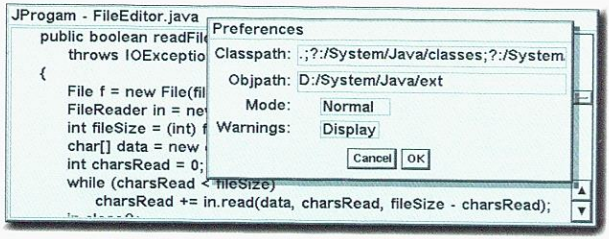
Some Java applications have been specially written or adapted for EPOC, e.g. the HartMath Computer Algebra System, Rainbow Notes, or the JE5 editor (all available at *pda.tucows.com*). These are provided as '.SIS' files and appear on the Extras bar just like any other EPOC applications. In fact, if the documentation doesn't mention it, the only way to tell that they're written in Java might be the brief 'Starting...' message shown by the JVM.

If the application *hasn't* already been 'EPOC-ified' then you may have to do some work before you can make use of it.

If the program is supplied as one or more **.class** files, the first thing to try is double-tapping on what looks like the main **.class** file from the System screen. Depending on how the program's been written, this may work—or not, with nothing happening after the 'Starting...' message, in which case you

Some other applets to try

- *members.aol.com/MHall75819/WordSearch/index.html* (the Word Search game shown in the last issue)
- *www.mjts.com/trap/trap.html* (a puzzle)
- *www.gettogethergames.com/pictionary/pichome.html* (the game of Pictionary)
- *www.tdb.uu.se/~karl/java/warp* (the scrolling shoot-em-up shown last time, complete with full graphics and sound)
- *www.geek-boy.com/java/rsa* (RSA encryption)
- *www.kamsc.k12.mi.us/room* (an interactive floor plan)
- *www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/5346/plano.html* (an interactive map)



Editing Java code in the Series 5mx's JVM

will probably need to set up something called...

The Classpath

(Note: this section is not for the faint-hearted)

Since Java is an object-oriented language, programs in Java are constructed from *classes*. These classes are arranged into *packages*. For example, the system String class is in a package called 'java.lang', so its full classname is 'java.lang.String'. In order for Java to know where to find classes, it stores each one in a file, in folders mirroring the package structure. So the String class is stored in the file 'java\lang\String.class'. But where to look for that 'java' folder?

Java has a list of places it looks for classes, called the *classpath*. This contains the names of folders, .jar files and/or .zip files. On many systems, the classpath can be set up as an environment variable, but as EPOC doesn't have them it provides you with a default classpath instead. This consists of:

- ?:\System\Java\lib\classes.zip
- ?:\System\Java\ext\
- The 'current' folder

(where ?: means that all drives are searched).

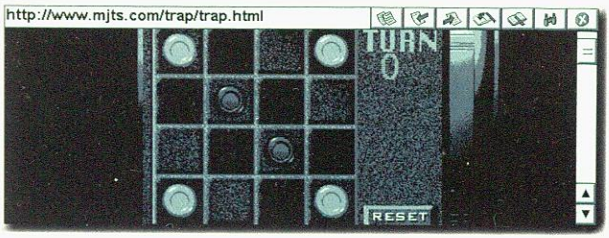
The first entry refers to the classes.zip file that gets installed with the JVM, and contains all the system classes that the language needs. If you open it up (e.g. with RMRZip), you can see a folder called 'java', which contains a folder called 'lang', which contains a file called String.java (amongst many others, of course)... and so on.

The second entry gives you a place to put other classes. For example, if I created a class called 'uk.co.cix.gidds.MyClass', the compiler would create a file called 'MyClass.class' and I could copy it to '\System\Java\ext\uk\co\cix\gidds\MyClass.class'. Then Java would be able to find it.

(The package name I used here (uk.co.cix.gidds) is based on my URL in reverse. This is a standard convention which ensures that different people's packages don't clash with each other).

So, how does this help in running Java applications? If a class was defined without a package then you can double-tap on it from the System screen, as it's obviously in the current folder. Another possibility would be to move all the classes into an appropriate sub folder of \System\Java\ext\, and double-tap on them from there.

Alternatively, you can use a *shell*. This is a command-driven program, like the famous MS-DOS command line. Psion provide one called 'eshell.exe' on their web site, but there are probably others. From the shell you can run the JVM, specifying your own list to add to the classpath: just type 'java -cp ' followed by the name of the folder or .jar file containing the application, and then the full



Another web-based Java game applet running on the 5mx

name of the class to run (usually its filename, excluding the '.class' suffix).

One last and very powerful option (if you have a PC) is to use the Java Software Development Kit (SDK), now available free from Symbian, to 'EPOC-ify' the application. Not only can you set up a classpath, but you can also give the application a proper icon and a title for Extras bar use. See the SDK for further details.

Setting up a classpath isn't always as awkward as you might think from the above—often the documentation for an application will help. (Sun have understood the difficulty, and with the most recent version (Java 2) have removed much of the need to set the classpath yourself.)

In use

As you can see from the boxout at the bottom of this page, Java applications tend to be more 'serious' and powerful than applets, though there are no hard and fast rules. There are many thousands of applications and applets out there, of course: they range from simple animation and scrolling messages to fractal images and multi-player games. From net-based applications like email, FTP, and terminal emulators to encryption, mapping and design applications. A good site to visit is the Java Review Service (*jars.developer.com*), which has a huge directory of Java programs.

Many of these programs require Java 1.2, which isn't (yet) supported on EPOC, so you need to be careful. For now just seek out programs designed for Java 1.0 or 1.1, but that still includes a vast selection. If in doubt,

A few useful Java applications

- *cac.psu.edu/~jar170/java/ReitFtp.class* (an FTP application for retrieving files across the net)
- *www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/4081/Ftp.zip* (similar to above)
- *www.first.gmd.de/persons/leo/java/Telnet/index.download.html* (a Telnet application, letting you log onto other computers across the net)
- *www.joot.com/software/emulator/terminal322.zip* (a terminal emulator, like the built-in Comms application)
- *www.alphaworks.com/aw.nsf/files?searchview&Query=DOWNIRC+Client+for+JavaDOWN* (an IRC client, for chatting across the net)

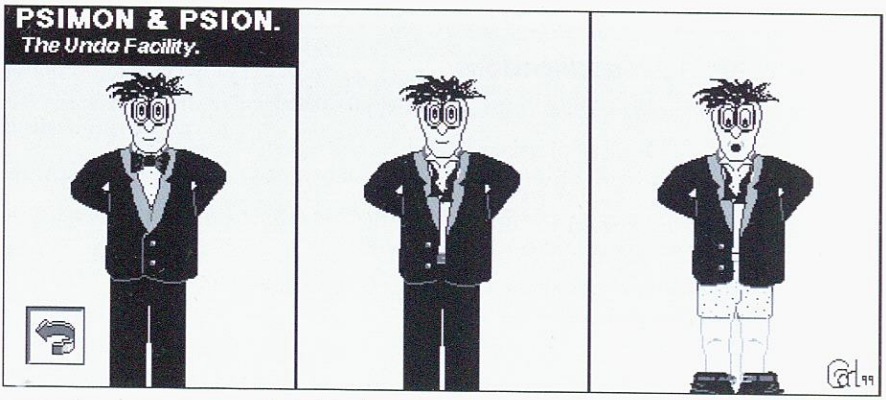
Moving beyond games—seriously useful Java functionality on the Internet

try it—you can't do any harm. Running a Java 1.2 program will probably only give a error on the console (usually a 'class not found' exception).

I was pleasantly surprised at how well many Java programs work on EPOC machines. For example, the 'Warp' game applet (pictured in the last instalment) ran straight off, including not only great graphics but animation and sound effects. It ran fairly slowly but was still playable. Who would have thought, a few years ago, that you'd be able to run a PC game unchanged on a Psion?

The Telnet application proved impressive, too. After entering a hostname, the JVM automatically connected to my modem, dialled up my Internet Service Provider and logged straight on to the remote system. And this from a program that knows nothing about my Psion, let alone my ISP!

The third part of this article will look at how to write Java programs using only your EPOC machine, some sticky-backed plastic and an old washing-up liquid bottle.



Advanced spreadsheet techniques

Creating a simple lottery number checker using logic, logic and more logic!

by Steve Litchfield

It's a fair bet that most of us have played our national lottery at some point in our lives, whichever country you live in. Many of us also belong (usually somewhat light-heartedly) to an office or family 'syndicate', with entry monies and winnings divided equally. All of which is fine as long as you're not the unfortunate soul who has to go through your syndicate's sets of ball numbers each week, checking for a possible win.

As you might expect, such a simple but monotonous task is ideal for farming out to a computer. There are several lottery syndicate programs already available as shareware, but why bother when we can have some fun discovering another advanced spreadsheet? As ever, the techniques we look at here are nothing new (and indeed work quite happily on the Series 3 range too)—again I'm simply hoping to extend your mental preconceptions of what spreadsheets can and can't do.

Managing a syndicate essentially involves checking the six ball numbers pulled out by the lottery company against the sets of six numbers chosen by each of the people in the scheme. Some office syndicates might have as many as 30 sets of numbers in play, making a manual check every week very laborious indeed. The winning combinations for most

C3 1

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Drawn		12	14	16	34	48	49	
2		No.							
3	Ticket lines	1	1	2	3	12	13	14	
4		2							
5		3							
6		4							
7		5							
8		6							

The basic layout; entering some example numbers

lotteries tend to involve matching as many balls as possible, with three matches being the lowest tier of reward.

Let's make a start by typing in a few random ball numbers in cells C1 to H1—these are the numbers you might type in after watching the lottery program each week on TV. Beneath this, in C3 to H3 and below, you can start entering the sets of numbers used by your syndicate. Don't worry, by the way, if you've no interest in lottery matters, this is ultimately a spreadsheet tutorial and any old set of random numbers will do just fine.

Now for the guts of the sheet. As ever, we'll keep the workings separate and off to one side. Once the formulæ have been tested, there's no reason to see any of the intermediate cells ever again. In I3 to N3, we need to check each of the syndicate ball numbers six cells to the left against each of the lottery-drawn numbers in the top row. In theory, you could program all the logic for each row into a single cell with a formula of about 350 characters in length, but if you can construct and type in such a monster without making a mistake then you're more accomplished than I.

Much easier is to break the logic needed down into smaller chunks. Let's look in detail at the formula in I3 (which should all appear on a single line, of course):

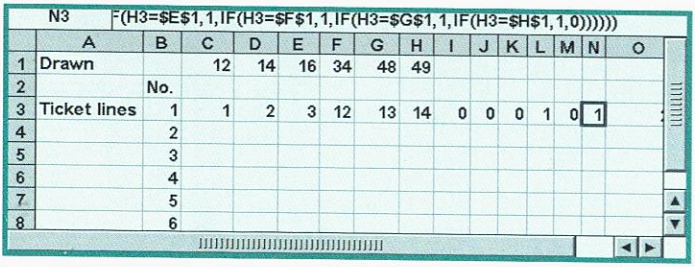
```
=IF(C3=$C$1,1,IF(C3=$D$1,1,IF(C3=$E$1,1,
IF(C3=$F$1,1,IF(C3=$G$1,1,IF(C3=$H$1,1,0)))))))
```

Horrendous, isn't it? But look more closely, there's a pattern, with each logical test being embedded within the preceding one and dependent on its outcome. In plain English, C3 is checked against C1. If there's a match, the formula returns 1 and that's that. If the two are different, C3 is then checked against D1, and so on. At each stage, a match will simply return 1, and if *none* of the numbers match then the formula will just return the final zero. Note especially the closing series of six brackets, needed to balance up the six we opened up earlier in the formula. With any expression of over about 20 characters, it's always a good idea to count the number of opening and closing brackets, checking that the two numbers agree with each other.

Absolute referencing

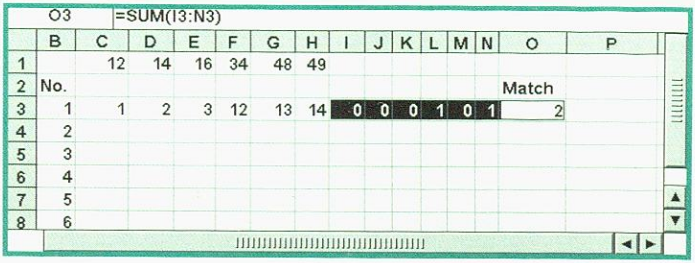
Notice how I quoted $C$1, etc. Using absolute cell referencing is vital here, as we're about to copy our laboriously typed-in formula into cells J3 to N3 and then also down into the rows underneath. And all the while, the lottery numbers to be checked against remain the same, in cells C1 to H1. As always, using the dollar signs (e.g. $C$1) tells Sheet not to rework the cell references when copying around the spreadsheet.

Copy cell I3 now, pasting the formula into J3 to N3 as planned. If everything works correctly, you'll now have a row of six "1"s and "0"s. Zeros are obviously more likely

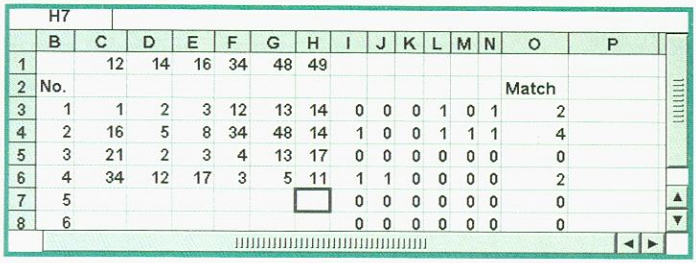


Here the individual ball match formulae are in place and working

Using O3 to keep track of the total matches for each row



O3	=SUM(I3:N3)													
	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
1		12	14	16	34	48	49								
2	No.													Match	
3	1	1	2	3	12	13	14	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	
4	2														
5	3														
6	4														
7	5														
8	6														



H7															
	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
1		12	14	16	34	48	49								
2	No.													Match	
3	1	1	2	3	12	13	14	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	
4	2	16	5	8	34	48	14	1	0	0	1	1	1	4	
5	3	21	2	3	4	13	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
6	4	34	12	17	3	5	11	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	
7	5							0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
8	6							0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Entering different sets of numbers to check that the logic works properly

unless you happened to match many of the 'winning' numbers.

The next task is to add up the number of matches on each line and report any possible winnings. In cell O3, enter

=SUM(I3:N3)

Check the logic!

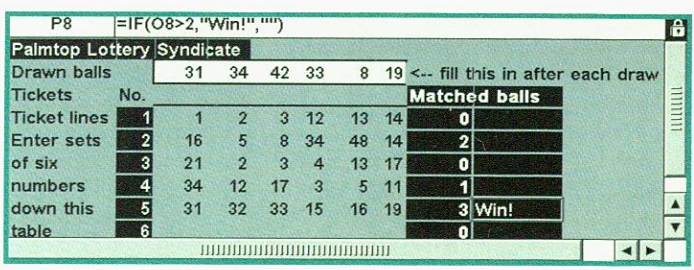
Just to check that our logic works properly (and that you haven't made any typing errors in the long formula), it's worth taking the time to enter a few more rows of example data, double-checking that the number of reported matches is correct. It may not look much yet, but as the number of rows starts to grow the time saved by letting Sheet take the strain will be considerable.

Before signing off, a nice little tweak to save even more time is to copy this formula down column P:

=IF(O3>2,"Win!","")

As you can probably guess, this just writes "Win!" into the column if the row contained more than two ball matches. Rows with no winning content are left unadorned, making

With the 'Win!' logic, formatting and protection in place



P8	=IF(O8>2,"Win!","")							
Palmtop Lottery	Syndicate							
Drawn balls		31	34	42	33	8	19	<-- fill this in after each draw
Tickets	No.							Matched balls
Ticket lines	1	1	2	3	12	13	14	0	
Enter sets	2	16	5	8	34	48	14	2	
of six	3	21	2	3	4	13	17	0	
numbers	4	34	12	17	3	5	11	1	
down this	5	31	32	33	15	16	19	3	Win!
table	6							0	

scanning down the sheet for possible wins even quicker.

Don't forget the formatting

By tradition, the last step in any advanced spreadsheet of mine is to apply formatting, shading and protection to help the user out in real-world use. When receiving spreadsheet submissions for the PocketInfo web site, I have to confess that I shudder when receiving sheets that are left in plain text, with no attempt at protection or emphasis, no optimization of column widths, and so on. Yes, I can spend five minutes working out which cells to start typing numbers into, but then I'm paid to do this. The spreadsheet beginner, when faced with a plain and confusing sheet, will probably either type into the wrong cells and overwrite an important formula or give up in frustration. For the sake of a few seconds' thought on our behalf, we can use shading to make it abundantly clear which cells to use and which to avoid. And even if the user *does* start entering information in the wrong place, adding protection to our spreadsheet will ensure that the formulæ can't be overwritten.

Looking at the last screen shot on the previous page, note the way I 'hid' our intermediate columns I to N by using the trick of setting their width to zero. If you need to 'unhide' them again, perhaps to copy the formulæ down into extra rows or to correct an error, you'll wonder how on earth to select the columns given that they don't appear on screen and that the cell cursor jumps straight to the cells on either side of the hidden range. One way to get round this is to position the cursor anywhere in the sheet and use the 'Column width' menu command. On the 'For columns:' line of the dialog, simply write in the column range manually, e.g. "I:N".

What do you want?

If you have an aspect of advanced Psion operation that you'd like to see covered in future issues of *Palmtop* then why not contact us?

Please see page 1 for contact details

The Apple connection

Steve Clack looks at how to connect your Psion to an Apple Macintosh

There's no escaping the fact that Psion-to-Mac connectivity is fairly dismal. PsiWin, for all its foibles, offers PC users a level of sophistication that Mac owners don't enjoy, *particularly* if you're an EPOC user.

What are my options?

Before even considering how to connect your Psion to an Apple Macintosh, we'll summarise what you can (and can't) do, to help you decide how best to proceed.

Before deciding upon the setup you wish to use, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What level of 'connectivity' do you need? If you simply need a means to backup your Psion and perform software installations then the Macintosh software available for both EPOC (Series 5 range) and SIBO (Series 3 range) models is perfectly adequate. If this is the case, then you simply need to make the physical connection between your Psion and Mac.
2. Do you also need to share or exchange data between the two computers? If you're a Series 5 user who wants to exchange spreadsheets, Word documents, etc. then you'll have to resort to PsiWin, running under some kind of PC emulation on your Mac. If you're a Series 3 user, you can at least convert Word and Sheet documents on the two machines, using Psion's own PsiMac software.

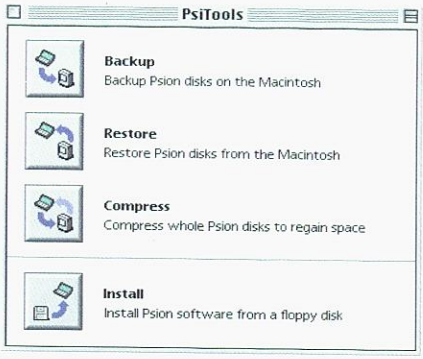
Software

Based on your response to the above questions, these are your software options:

If you fall into category '1' above, you can safely use Psion's own software solutions: that's PsiMac for the Series 3, or MacConnect for Series 5/EPOC.

On a Series 3

PsiMac for the Series 3 (reviewed in issue 14) will perform full backup and restore of all the files on your Psion, and software installation via standard CTL files. It can be set to auto-



Backup and install with PsiMac and MacConnect

matically remind you to back up your Psion after a pre-defined period, and will of course only backup those files that have changed since last time. It will automatically archive up to nine previous backups if required.

PsiMac's file conversion facilities allow you to exchange Word and Sheet files with your Mac, but because the software hasn't been updated for at least two years, more recent Mac formats aren't supported. This means that in order to convert (say) an AppleWorks/ClarisWorks 5 or Word/Excel 98 file, you'll need to re-save it on your Mac as an earlier version first.

Because the Series 3 range has the ability to save Word files in RTF format, you can bypass PsiMac's file conversion completely by saving into RTF format on your Psion and simply drag-and-drop copying the file to your Mac. Almost all word processors can read RTF (Rich Text Format), and it successfully maintains almost all formatting options.

Similarly, Series 3 Sheet will save into Lotus WK1 or WKS formats, which can be read by any version of Microsoft Excel. ClarisWorks/AppleWorks can't read these files, and don't be tempted to use the DIF (Data Interchange Format) option as it will convert all your formulae into raw numbers.

Database files can easily be imported or exported as comma or tab delimited data, as explained in depth in our 'Working with Data' article in issue 21.

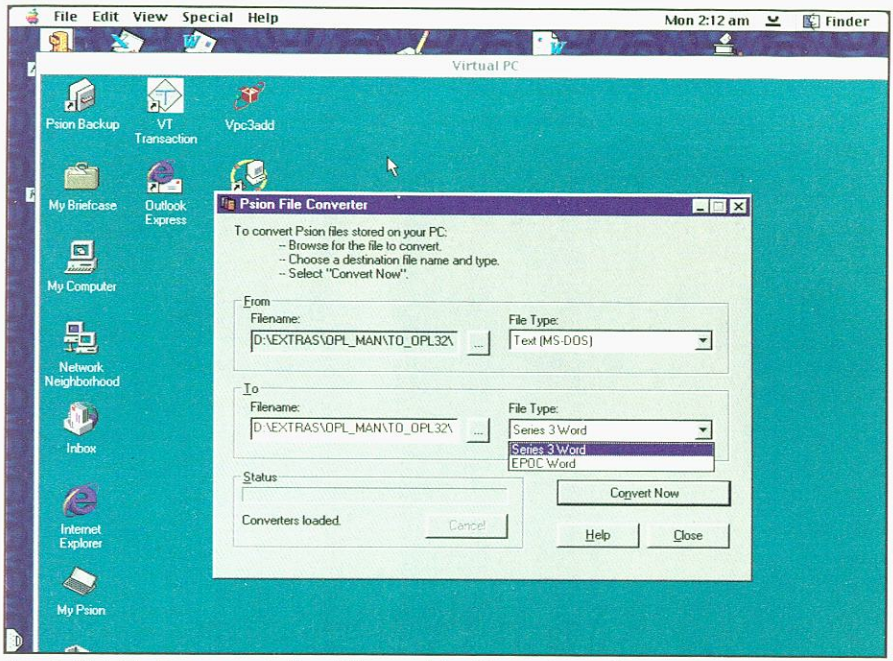
Apart from Word, Sheet and Data files, no other file conversions are supported. Because Psion Agendas can't be saved into any alternative file formats there is NO possibility of exchanging your Psion diary with a Mac, and no tidy way to extract Jotter files. The best you can do is print these to a text file (set printer type to 'General' and printer device as 'File'). You can then transfer and open these files using any word processor or Simpletext and extract any vital text clippings—as a last resort.

On a Series 5/EPOC machine

MacConnect (reviewed in issue 15) for the Series 5 is, surprisingly, far inferior to PsiMac. Although it sports the same backup/restore and SIS-based software installation facilities, it has *absolutely no* file convertors built in. Coupled with the fact that EPOC machines no longer allow files to be saved directly into RTF/WK1/WKS/DIF formats, the situation becomes even worse.

The smallest relief comes in the ability to save Word files as plain ASCII text (using 'File | More | Export as text file...') and copying to your Mac, but this loses all formatting apart from simple paragraph breaks, but *including* bold/italic/underline emphases.

Assuming that, in common with most Mac users, you can't live with these severe limitations, then you'll have to incorporate some kind of PC emulation into your workflow...



Using PsiWin's File Converter under Virtual PC on an iMac. Files can be transferred via PsiWin or Mac software

The accursed PC

Although something of an anathema to many Mac users, PC emulation will give access to all the myriad file conversion utilities of PsiWin, solving most of your problems at a stroke. The following options are currently available:

1. Buy a copy of Virtual PC or SoftWindows (check your usual Macintosh dealer or Mac magazine for details). Install PsiWin as you would on an ordinary PC and set up as per PsiWin's instructions.
2. Get a hardware PC or DOS compatibility card for your Mac. These are relatively expensive and largely unnecessary with modern G3/G4-based Macs, which run Windows at perfectly adequate speeds under software emulation.

Although running PsiWin under a 'virtual' PC is usually satisfactory, some software solutions impose a maximum connection speed of 56kbps or lower. This is the maximum rate for Series 3a/3c machines anyway, but slightly restrictive for EPOC models, which would otherwise connect at 115kbps. Also, certain combinations of MacOS/Psion/connection cable configuration can prove to be inexplicably unreliable.

Given the choice, my own preferred solution is to use PsiMac/MacConnect for basic backup/restore and software installation in the native Macintosh environment, switching to PsiWin only to convert files via its 'File Converter' facility. This option has the benefit of allowing you to spend less time in a PC environment, requires no mapping of the virtual PC serial

ports to your Mac ports, and generally makes the whole process faster and more seamless.

All PC emulators allow you to share folders between PC and Mac environments, so to copy files for conversion simply drag them into a common folder, run them through PsiWin's Convert Files, then re-save to the same folder and copy directly to your Psion.

If you do choose to use PsiWin alone, then remember that if you're using an EPOC machine a connection cable will already be provided. By adapting the 9-way PC serial cable to your Mac serial port you'll save yourself the expense of having to buy MacConnect.

Although more than 90 percent of commercial EPOC software is now supplied with SIS file installation (see 'Installing software - the easy way' in issue 21), there are still a few that rely on Windows-based installation/setup routines. For these programs some form of PC emulation is of course essential.

Installing the software

Unless you take the PsiWin-only route, you'll need to install either PsiMac or MacConnect before setting to work. This can be trickier than you'd expect, depending upon what Mac you're using:

- Both PsiMac and MacConnect are only available on 3½" floppy disk. If you have

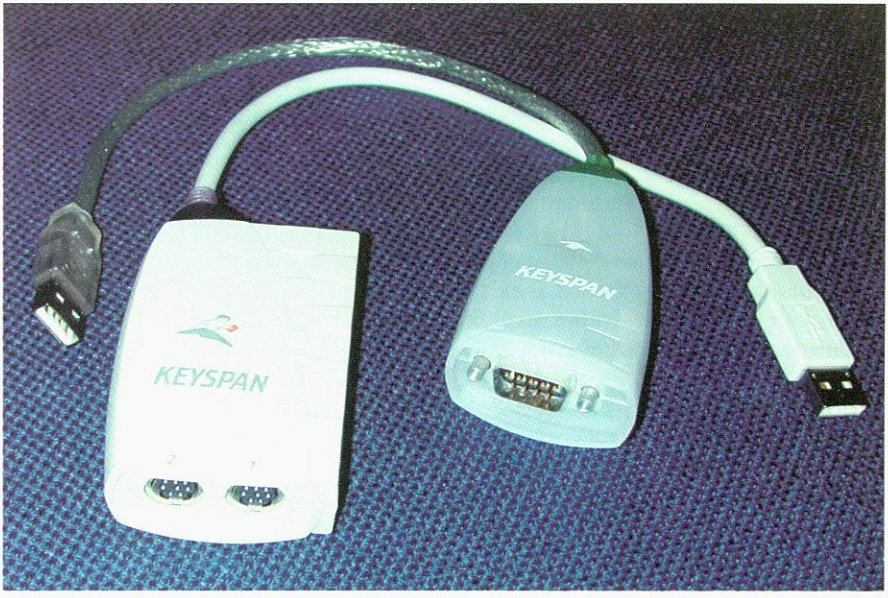
a floppy-less iMac, iBook or blue-and-white G3/G4 then you'll either need a separate floppy drive or have to copy the files across a network. Once installed, both programs comprise just one control panel item and one extension: named 'Psion' and 'Psion extension' respectively in the case of MacConnect, and 'PsiMac' and 'PsiMac extension' for PsiMac. If you're upgrading from an older Macintosh you can simply copy the two files to your new machine, either across a network or by emailing the files to yourself.

- Neither PsiMac nor MacConnect appears to work with the latest Mac OS 9. We'll be reporting further on this incompatibility in the next issue. For the time being, run OS 8.6 or earlier.

Making a connection

Regardless of which software/hardware combination you're using, you'll need to make a physical connection between your Macintosh and Psion in order for the two to communicate. Here are some useful pointers:

- If you have a pre-G3 Macintosh or a beige G3 then the cable supplied with PsiMac or MacConnect will plug directly into any serial port (the printer port or modem port). Just be sure to select the appropriate one under the 'Preferences' menu option of either program.
- If you have a USB-based Mac such as an iMac, iBook or blue-and-white G3/G4, then you'll need some kind of USB-to-serial adaptor. The Keyspan Twin USB Adaptor works faultlessly for this, at speeds of up to 115kbps. The cheaper Keyspan PDA adaptor also works, but only up to



Keyspan's Twin USB Adaptor (left), and the slower but cheaper PDA adaptor (right)

56kbps. Note also that the latter is terminated in a 9-way 'D' connector. If using an EPOC machine then you can use the standard PsiWin cable to connect to this, but if you only have PsiMac you'll also need to buy a Mac-to-PC serial adaptor from your Mac stockist.

- For blue-and-white G3/G4 machines and iMacs with an unused internal modem port, you can purchase the excellent Stealth Serial Port Adaptor (which supports speeds up to 230kbps).
- We have also heard reports that the serial ports built into the iDock iMac stand work with both PsiMac and MacConnect, and other suitable products are coming onto the market. Check your Mac stockist or Mac magazines for latest pricing and availability of all items mentioned in this article.
- If you have an infrared-enabled PowerBook or one of the earlier IR iMacs, you *won't* be able to connect via infrared, as suitable infrared drivers were never produced for PsiMac or MacConnect.

Whichever solution you choose, just be sure to configure PsiMac, MacConnect or your PC emulator software to connect to the appropriate port designation, and check that your Psion and Mac are both communicating at the same speed. Note that although the Series 3mx can communicate at 115kbps, PsiMac only operates up to 56kbps, so you'll need to slow your 3mx down to match this.

Printing pains

None of the Mac connectivity software currently supports printing via your Mac, and PsiWin's Psion Print facility won't work under emulation. Connecting your Psion directly to a Mac printer won't generally work either, as Psion haven't included drivers for any Mac-specific printers. Most Apple LaserWriters (and non-Apple laser printers) will work though, provided they can be set up for Laserjet 3 or Laserjet 4 emulation—check your printer documentation for details.

Series 3 models have a Postscript printer driver built in, so you can print directly to most Apple LaserWriters without having to set up any emulation. Many recent laser printers have both serial and parallel ports, and you can set the emulation mode independently for each. If this is the case then a good solution is to buy a Psion Parallel Printer Link and leave it permanently connected to the otherwise unused parallel port, connecting your Mac(s) via the usual Appletalk or Ethernet ports.

Adaptors galore

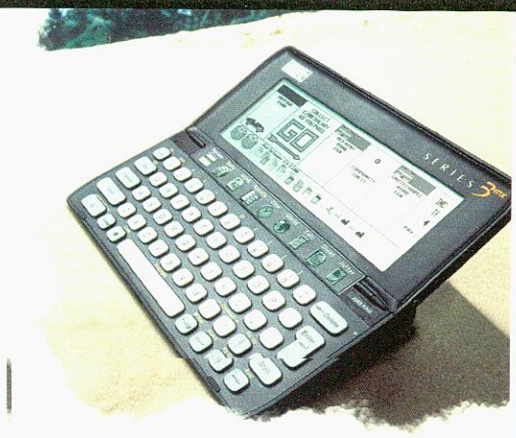
For backing up CompactFlash disks, USB-to-CF adaptors (as described on page 50) *should* be usable with Macs, though all the units we've tried so far have given stability problems and data errors. We'll be reporting on this in further issues as suitable driver updates become available.

Fun and games

All this may seem like an awful lot of trouble, but sadly there are no better solutions available at present. Various staff at Psion have intimated that a Macintosh equivalent to PsiWin *may* eventually be produced, but it's not something we can rely on. In the meantime we're stuck with a potential morass of cable adaptors and PC emulation. In certain cases the combination of hardware and software needed to get a satisfactory solution can amount to a few hundred pounds or more. In these cases there's always that fleeting idea of buying a cheap PC *just* to connect to your Psion, but then again that would be crazy...

THREE for all

Stuart Gray examines more highlights from the Series 3 world



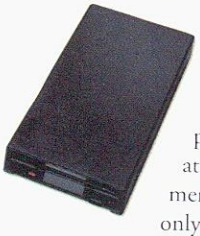
Disaster struck the household as I started this article: my main PC, a Windows 98 machine, turned up its toes and died. Like most people in the computer business, I use a vastly under-specified machine at home, nursing it along by faith and fresh air.

Nevertheless, installing a beta copy of Windows 2000 (in the interests of seeing just how well PsiWin runs on it) was sadly too much for the poor creature. Once the initial shock wore off however, it gave me a chance to evaluate my computer usage patterns, and to ponder whether a PC is a cost effective accessory for me.

I say accessory, because when I really looked critically at it, I found that 90 percent of my time is spent on my 3c. All my 'mission critical' work—articles, quotations, invoices, letters—are written and stored on the Psion. Documents are printed on a Canon BJC-80, which has the advantages of both an infrared port and a battery pack. I keep in contact by email via PsiMail Internet over an Ericsson GS18 mobile link, with which I also do quite a bit of web browsing. It's amazing how quickly pages download (even at 9600 bps) when the graphics are disabled.

In fact, the only tasks I need a PC to accomplish boil down to reading Internet newsgroups, writing HTML web pages, surfing certain web sites (more on this later), and backing up. My files are stored on a RAM SSD, applications on a couple of flash SSDs and the internal disk gets copied to a third flash disk—occasionally. Despite all this, it is useful to perform regular complete backups, and a PC has proved essential for compressing flash disks. So, given its untimely demise, how have I managed without a Windows machine? Very well, as it happens.

Firstly, the issue of backups. I really can't justify the expense of a complete set of spare SSDs on which to copy the contents of my machine, so I have invested instead in a second-hand Cyclone drive (most recently reviewed in issue 15, p34), which connects via the serial port of the Series 3c (or 3a, or 3mx) and allows the Psion to write to standard 1.44MB floppy disks. These appear as a local drive (C) to the filing system, and allow complete backups of all my Psion storage, with the exception of my 2MB flash disk. For this I use Serge Shestopalov's PsiZip (now distributed by RMR Software). This is an extremely useful utility, compressing and decompressing files using the standard ZIP format entirely on the Psion, allowing the contents of a 2MB SSD to be squeezed onto a single floppy disk. I did find one little foible with the Cyclone, which only applies



to the earlier models with the built-in battery compartment. Although an external power supply can be attached (and is recommended—the batteries only last for a few disk read/write operations), it is disabled if there are batteries fitted. A cause of much head-scratching until I worked it out, but not a problem with the current version. Now, if only there was a similar CD-ROM drive...

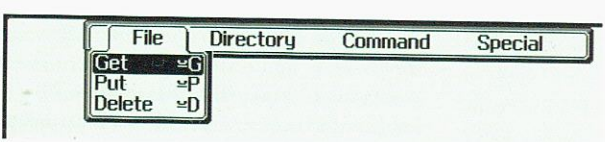
On the 'Net

Something I have done more of in recent weeks is surfing the Internet using Web, the browser component of PsiMail Internet (see issue 10, p16). Despite its remarkably small size it is surprisingly powerful, coping with many of the web sites of interest to Series 3 owners. There are caveats however, and these are becoming more relevant as other browsers become rather feature heavy. For a start, Web cannot cope with frames, let alone active server pages (addresses with a '.ASP' ending). Tables are recognised, but cells are displayed one after the other in a long column. Relative address jumps (of the form 'page.htm#section') cannot be resolved and some sites won't display at all. Most annoyingly, some of the free ISPs (e.g. Freeserve) don't allow Web to access their pages—presumably because it doesn't handle 'cookies', and so the server can't validate or track the visitor. As more and more shareware authors start web sites on these systems, this will become even more problematical.

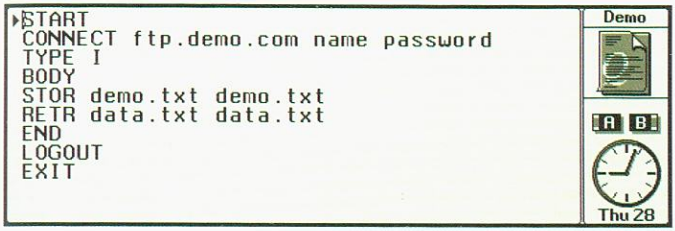
FTP-ability

While on the subject, a new and very useful tool has been released for PsiMail Internet users. Until now, traffic from the Information Superhighway has been very much a one-way affair, with no method of sending files to Internet servers. A fully-fledged FTP client has now been written and it does the job splendidly. PsiFTP, by Pavel Ramert, uses the connection information from the Setup component of PsiMail Internet (which must be running in order to use PsiFTP) to log on to a remote FTP server. Once connected, there are the usual facilities to make and destroy subdirectories, pull down a directory listing, store, retrieve and delete files. The interface is straightforward, being very similar to the built-in Comms application. The screen shows the commands transferred to and from the server and instructions are sent using menu commands and hotkeys.

If you know exactly which commands you will be issuing, it is quicker (and therefore cheaper) to use the 'batch' mode of operation, in which you write a list of instructions and save them with a '.FTP' extension. When stored in a \FTP\ directory, they appear beneath the PsiFTP icon—running them starts the session and follows the list of instructions. Any commands which are not completed are left in the script for execution at a later time. Scripts are also the only way to perform multiple file movements. It's difficult to see what could be improved, but a slicker interface—perhaps mimicking the Files application on the 3c/3mx, with local disks on one side and remote disks on the other, or fully integrating the FTP server as a remote



The simple appearance of PsiFTP screen and menu cards hide a very powerful application...



Scripting increases control over file transfers

filing system (REM::)—would certainly be a worthwhile move. A good application, and one which is very welcome. The next step is a newsreader. Anyone up for it?

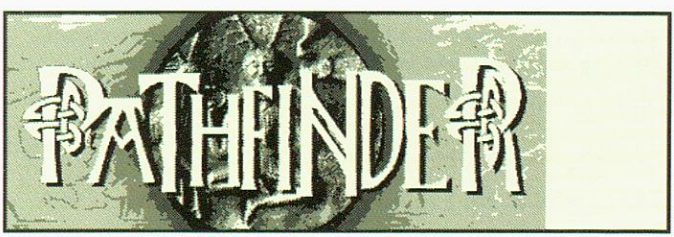
Pathfinder

Certainly a time for ambitious software projects. Dominic Wright has started on a game type which is new to the Psion: the platform-based RPG (Role Playing Game). You take the rôle of a young villager, charged with the task of finding help for his village from a person who happens to live in the middle of a dangerous forest. During the quest, you must interact with various other characters, who impart both useful and not-so-useful information to you. Others need to be fought, involving hitting [Enter] many times in rapid succession. Depending on the success of your attack and defence, health points are deducted from both you and your opponent. Whoever loses all their points first dies, and if you win you can then replenish your supplies by eating food or using magic. A good concept which could be a winner. Pathfinder is currently only a playable demo, but all the elements of the final product are on show.

Availability

PsiFTP - *freespace.virgin.net/ro.cutler* .

Pathfinder - *www.dom-linda.freeserve.co.uk* and mirrored for PsiMail Internet users only on Complete Threedom at *home.clara.net/srtgray* .



The impressive splash screen for Pathfinder

Pathfinder: A couple of the non-player characters awaiting your arrival

Win a FREE 4MB flash SSD or 80MB CompactFlash!!

1. *Which has the larger screen resolution: the Psion Series 3 or the Revo?*

2. *Where does 'Squish man' appear?*

3. *What's the name of Psions DOS backup software ?*

Whether you're a Series 3, Series 5, Ericsson MC218 or Oregon Osaris user, you can expand the capacity of your Psion computer by winning either a Psion 4MB flash SSD or 80MB CompactFlash—you choose which prize you want.

Just answer the three questions above and send your answers on a postcard to Palmtop Publications, PO Box 188, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX6 0GP, ENGLAND.

We can only accept entries by postcard, and all postcards must be clearly labelled COMPETITION 26. Any entries received by means other than postcard will be discarded. Please include your prize choice and a contact telephone number on your postcard. Anyone posting multiple entries will be disqualified.

All entries must reach us by 20th January 2000, and the winner will be notified on the following day. The decision of Palmtop Publications is final.

Last issue's winner: Mr J Thomas, Maidstone, Kent

Correct answers: 1. 240 2. Leather wrap-around 3. Neuon's Doodler 3

Competition sponsored by Expansys Ltd.

Visit www.expansys.co.uk

A beginners' guide to PROGRAMMING your PSION

Part five of our easy introduction to programming

In the last issue we looked at a number of methods for calling procedures and making flow control decisions. Now we'll take a look at the infamous GOTO keyword, discover how to handle errors in a friendly fashion and tackle looping in depth.

Spaghetti code

Another way of changing the flow of processing (or branching) in OPL is via the GOTO keyword, but this is best avoided unless used in exceptional situations (such as error handling), as it tends to lead to poor program structure. Indiscriminate use of GOTO can make source code almost unreadable and far more prone to bugs.

For example, you might be tempted to use something like:

```
  IF flag% = 1
    GOTO LABELA::
  ENDIF
  PRINT "Congratulations"
  PRINT "You Won"
  RETURN
LABELA::
  PRINT "You lost!"
  RETURN
```

instead of:

```
  IF flag% = 1
    PRINT "You lost!"
  ELSE
    PRINT "Congratulations"
    PRINT "You Won"
```

```
  ENDIF
  RETURN
```

Having multiple returns from a procedure or section of code is generally bad practice and usually indicates poor design.

Bullet proof code

One special variant of this sort of branching is the ONERR keyword, which is very useful in dealing with unexpected error conditions. When writing programs for use by others, whether shareware, freeware or commercial, you should always design the code to deal with both normal and exceptional situations. Don't assume anything. Under certain circumstances, errors may be generated by the system (for example, a file not existing or a disk being full) or due to user actions (for example, hitting the wrong key or selecting a file of the wrong type), and you should try to deal with both. Fortunately, OPL has quite secure methods for handling most common error situations. For example, a snippet of code is shown below that anticipates a possible divide by zero error, but will also display a message when encountering errors that the programmer did not specifically plan for:

```
val% = 1000
fact% = 0  REM a illegal number in this context,
           REM perhaps input by the user or the
           REM result of a previous calculation
result%:(val%, fact%) REM call the procedure


PROC result%:(value%, factor%)
  ONERR EXCEPTION REM jump to the label "EXCEPTION" if
error
  RETURN value% / factor% REM calc and return if no error


EXCEPTION::
  ONERR OFF
  IF ERR = - 8
    PRINT "Divide by zero error"
  ELSE REM handle any other type of error
    PRINT "Error",ERR,ERR$(ERR)
  ENDIF
  RETURN 0
ENDP
```

Note that it is always a good idea for error handling code to turn off the error handling functionality (with ONERR OFF) as its very first step, to prevent any other errors that occur during the error processing and reporting process from causing an endless loop. In the EXCEPTION:: code above, note the use of the OPL ERR and ERR$ functions to return both the OPL error code number and associated error message string.

You can use the RAISE keyword for testing your error handling procedures, for overriding the normal error message and providing a more appropriate system message, or even providing a specific new error code and message of your own.

For example:

```
RAISE x%
```

Raises an error corresponding to error number x%. This may be one of the errors in the standard OPL list or a new number defined by you. The error is handled by the error processing mechanism currently in use—either OPL's own, which stops the program and displays an error message, or via the ONERR handler if you have ONERR on.

An alternative strategy for handling errors is to use the TRAP keyword to anticipate those that are really common, such as a needed file not being found. Many OPL keywords can be preceded by TRAP.

For example, `TRAP FIRST`

Any error resulting from the execution of the FIRST command (used with OPL database files) will be trapped. Program execution will continue at the next line, but in the event of an error the ERR keyword will return a non-zero error code. TRAP overrides any existing ONERR error handling. Here's a simple example of TRAP in action:

```
TRAP OPEN "myfile",A,a$
status%=ERR
IF status%  REM if status% is non-zero
  IF status%=-101
    PRINT "File is already open!"
  ELSE
    PRINT ERR$(status%)
  ENDIF
ENDIF
```

Loopy Code

Now let's look at doing repetitive tasks using OPL's looping keywords. We'll also combine looping with the conditional testing and branching keywords covered earlier. It's a very common requirement in most programs of any significance to repeat a set of instructions multiple times, so virtually all programming languages have suitable keywords for creating loops. OPL has two such constructs:

- **DO...UNTIL** - repeats a set of instructions until a certain test condition is true.
- **WHILE...ENDWH** - repeats a set of instructions while a certain test condition is true.

Here's an example of **DO...UNTIL**

```
PROC loopydo:
LOCAL a%
```

```
a% = 10
DO
  PRINT "A=";a%
  a% = a% - 1
UNTIL a% = 0
PRINT "Finished"
GET
ENDP
```

OPL interprets the DO...UNTIL construct above as follows:

"Repeat all of the instructions inside the DO...UNTIL section of code until the condition after the UNTIL keyword is met. When the condition is met (i.e. true), drop out of the loop to the line immediately below the UNTIL statement."

The first time through the loop, a%=10. One is subtracted from a%, so that it is equal to 9 when the UNTIL statement is first reached. Since a% isn't zero yet, the program returns to the DO keyword and the loop is repeated. The loop will therefore repeat 10 times, until a% *does* equal zero.

When a% finally equals zero, the program continues with the instructions following the UNTIL statement. Note, the program statements inside a DO...UNTIL loop construct are always executed at least once.

Here's an example of **WHILE...ENDWH**

```
PROC loopywhile:
LOCAL a%
a% = 10
WHILE a% > 0
  PRINT "A=";a%
  a% = a% - 1
ENDWH
PRINT "Finished"
GET
ENDP
```

The instructions between the WHILE and ENDWH statements are executed only if the condition following the WHILE is true—in this case if a% is greater than 0.

Initially, a%=10 and so A=10 is displayed on the screen. a% is then reduced to 9 and control returned to the WHILE statement. a% is still greater than zero, and so A=9 is displayed. This continues until A=1 is displayed. a% is then reduced to zero, the WHILE test finally fails and so Finished is displayed. Therefore, unlike DO...UNTIL, it's possible for the instructions between WHILE and ENDWH not to be executed at all.

In the next instalment we'll look at jumping in and out of loops and how to get information from the user in a friendly and safe manner.

Working with

A practical tutorial for EPOC's newest built-in application

by Nigel Wright

Contacts is the new, built-in application designed to handle names and addresses on the Series 5mx and Revo. It's *vCard*-compliant, which allows easier exchange of information with other IrObex-enabled devices and vCard-compliant applications (such as the Palm V organiser and Microsoft's Outlook). IrObex, by the way, is a more advanced version of the IrDA standard for infrared data transmission.

Setting up

Before entering any information at all it pays to consider the structure of your contacts database. Think about the choice of labels to use, their naming and the information to be contained within them, the order of their appearance, and so on.

If you are importing information from an existing Data file or a PC-based program then you may have fewer options because your data is already ordered and organised, and also because there might be many hundreds of existing entries. However daunting it seems, it's worth considering a reorganisation at this point, as your names and addresses may have grown in a haphazard manner. For example, is it *really* necessary to have separate labels for house number and street? Or for first name and surname?

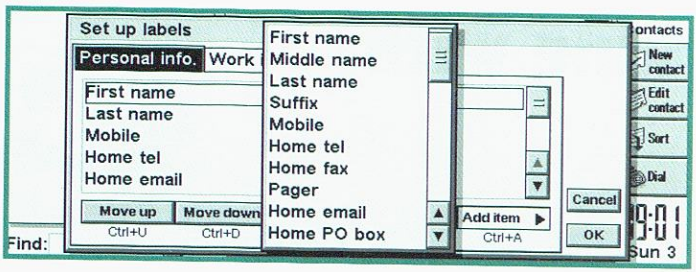
It's worth remembering that labels should also correspond to those used in your Microsoft Outlook profile (if you use it), especially if you intend to synchronise contact information between the two.

By default, labels are classified into three different types, stored on three tabbed pages:

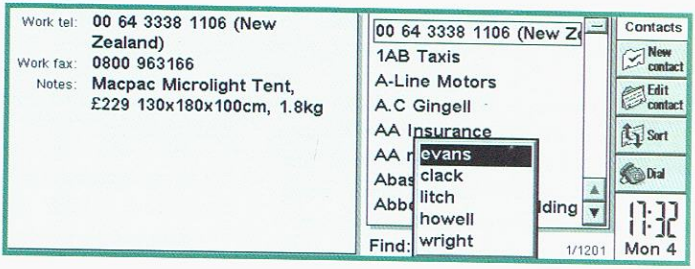
- **Personal info** (first name, surname, home address and phone number, etc.)
- **Work info** (company, job title, work phone number, etc.)
- **Other** (notes, contact log details, anniversaries, etc.)

The order of labels can be changed, they can be removed, renamed, and added to the three tabs. No extra labels can be defined though, so if you find there isn't a label to suit your needs you'll need to take an existing one and rename it as appropriate. Mind you, thirty-four pre-defined labels should be enough for most people's needs.

Most labels don't allow line breaks to be added, so if an entry contains (for instance) several telephone numbers then things can get untidy. In this case it's advisable to use the 'Work address' label and rename it (assuming



Setting up Contacts' labels



Previous searches in Contacts

you don't want to use this label as originally intended).

Searching

By default, searching is less flexible than in Data. Only the contents of the 'First name', 'Last name' and 'Company' labels are searched. Starting to type will naturally enter text into the search field and you just need to press [Enter] to complete the operation. With the flashing cursor already in the search box (press [Tab] if it's not), note that pressing [Tab] (again) will pop up a list of text strings most recently searched for (Data behaves in a similar manner).

To search for text contained in *all* labels you must use the 'Find in all text' ([Ctrl]+[F]) command. Wildcard searches can also be performed using a '*' for any number of unknown letters, perhaps when unsure of the spelling of a name, e.g. "birm*m".

Phone dialling

Automatic phone dialling works well, but has the limitation that if you rename labels and change their order they might no longer be recognised as dial-able labels. This is also a problem if you create a new phone-related label (e.g. '2nd mobile'), as Contacts won't recognise this as being dial-able. There's no means to specify a label as containing a phone number, and the only way around this is not to change the pre-defined phone labels at all. Such restrictions don't apply to files in Data.

Importing and exporting

Contact information can be exported in vCard (.vcf) format, but surprisingly there's no on-board method of importing from Data. There are two solutions to this: using PsiWin to synchronise with a PC-based PIM (e.g. Outlook) or a palmtop-based third party application (e.g. Pascal Nicholas' DataContact), both of which were covered in more detail in my 'Moving to the mx' article in issue 25.

Steve Godfrey's excellent PhoneMan Pro also provides a facility to import from Data. Contacts can also be 'beamed' in from other compatible organisers such as the Palm III and Palm V.

Exporting information as plain text is more difficult. At the time of writing there appears to be only one dedicated third party application to do this: Malcolm Bryant's C2F. A useful last resort to get information out is to print to a text file by setting the printer as 'General' (via 'Print setup...' under the 'File' menu).

File locations

The main data file is called Contacts.cdb by default and can be found in the C:\System\Data folder. Contacts allows this file to be moved to a CF disk, using 'Preferences', but keeping the file on the internal disk does result in faster operation. Don't be tempted to cut and paste this file from the System screen, as Contacts will then lose track of it, resulting in a new default file being created when the application is next started.

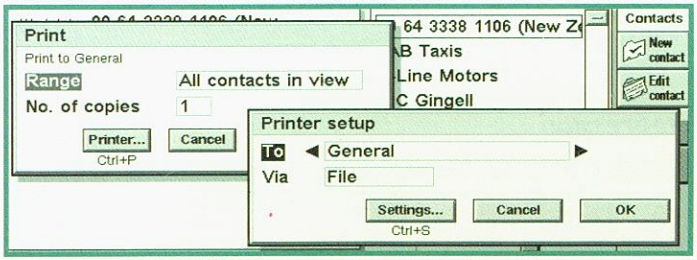
Although you can normally have only one Contacts file at a time, a macro for use with Macro5 (reviewed in issue 25) has recently appeared which provides a work around. This can be found at Pascal Nicolas' web site.

Saving space

As entries are edited, added or deleted the Contacts data file will grow in size. As with Agenda and Data files this can result in significant wasted space, so it's worthwhile to compress the file from time to time.

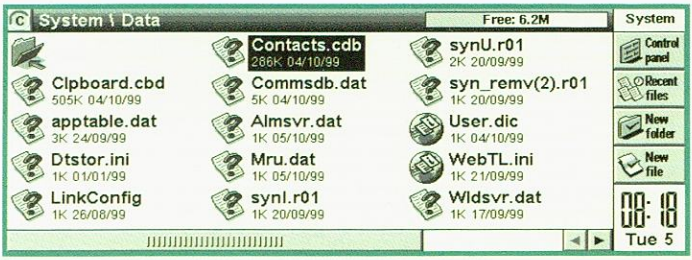
Fast action

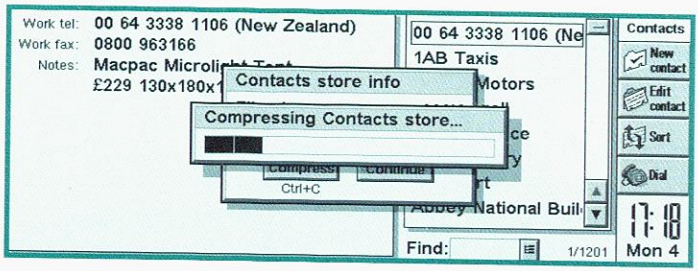
The highlight/cursor can be moved from the card browser to the contact card without the aid of the stylus, using the left or right arrow keys. When the highlight is active on the card browser you can scroll up or down the list of entries using the up or down arrow



Printing to file can often be useful

The location of Contacts' data file





Compressing your Contacts database

keys. With the triangular cursor active in the contact card, you can then scroll up and down a long contact entry. You'll also notice a thick black border around the outside of either the card or browser, depending on which one is currently 'active'.

Customising the view

The options for customising the view of Contacts are quite limited. The tool bar can of course be turned off, the card and card browser can be flipped from one side to another (useful for left-handers), and the card width can be increased to a maximum of 70 percent of the screen.

Contact logging

Don't forget to make full use of the 'Other' tab in each contact dialog. By adding dated notes, with details of conversations, agreements and future plans, it's possible to build up a complete record of your dealings with each person in your database.

Availability

Macro5 and DataContact - *www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Pines/1215*

C2F - *homepages.enterprise.net/pilita/c2f.html*

PhoneMan Pro - *www.sgsoftware.co.uk*

Automatic compression

I was able to write a simple macro to do this automatically at weekly intervals, controlled by Crontab (discussed in the Macro5 article on page 86 of issue 25):

Insert "Compressing Contacts.mbm" here.

```
Include "macro.oph"
PROC Macro:
        BgApp%:("Z:\System\Apps\Contacts\Contacts.app")
        Sendkey:("Shift+Ctrl+I")
        Pause 20
        Sendkey:("Ctrl+C")
        Pause 100
        Sendkey:("Enter")
ENDP
```

Which should I use, Contacts or Data?

Deciding whether to keep your address book in Data or Contacts depends upon your requirements. Contacts is specifically designed to manage only names, addresses, etc. while providing good integration with other applications, whereas Data is much more flexible as a general information storage system.

Contacts

- Follows international standards for data management
- Offers integration into Email
- Enables easier synchronisation with PC-based software and vCard-compliant devices
- Has its own structured layout
- Only one data file is normally allowed
- Doesn't allow embedding of objects

Data

- Is faster in operation
- Gives more flexible search and sort options
- Has more flexible field definitions, so different types of information can be stored
- A greater number of fields can be defined
- You can embed objects, such as Sketch, Sheet and Word documents
- Record sizes are virtually unlimited
- Any number of files can be stored on any disk, and in any folder
- No integration with Email

On the NET

Our regular look at what's happening online, and where to point your browser

by Pete Sipple

FreEPOC freebies

FreEPOC took to the web at the end of September, offering a truly free source of quality software for Psion owners. With programmers spread across Europe, all working for free, this is an admirable venture. The current range of software available is quite small, consisting of fewer than a dozen programs, including Clock5, the arcade game Adder, a talking clock, and a Yo-yo encyclopaedia. More releases are due soon.

www.freepoc.de

Fox facts

The Foxpop web site bills itself as "the web's premier resource for the GeoFox One handheld computer". Not a lot of use for those without a Geofox, you might think? Wrong. It has a surprising amount to offer *all* EPOC users, including regular newsletters, reviews, a speaker's corner and a look at the perfect PDA (created from user feedback). Other things worth looking out for are comments on the new Psion Revo and interviews.

www.foxpop.ndirect.co.uk

Revo-lutionary?

The new Psion Revo seems to have caused something of a stir...

"I bought the Revo—a great machine that makes the 3mx look very old fashioned. I can't be bothered with pen devices and clunky palmtops that can't run Windows 98. A slim palmtop with a keyboard is ideal for me (as a mobile PC companion)". (pat@my-deja.com)

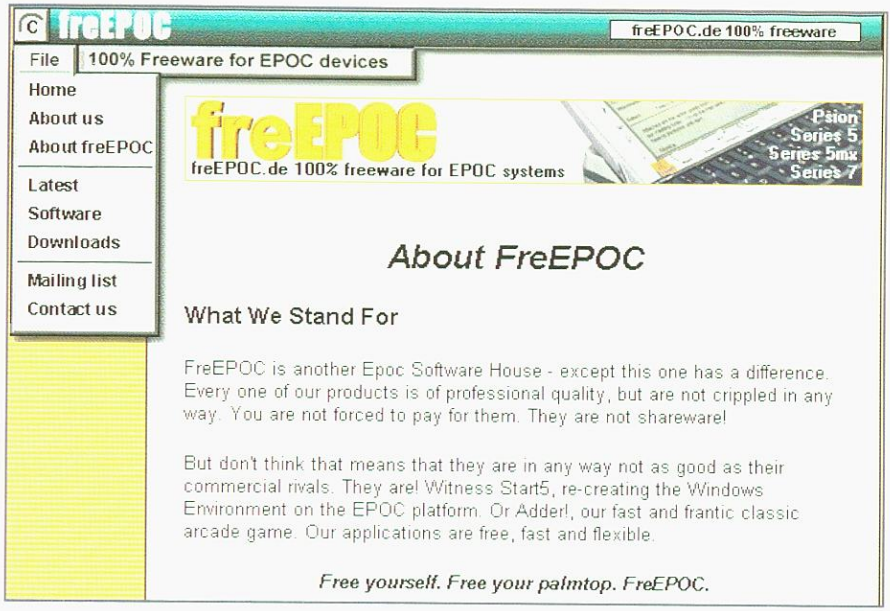
"Sorry if this has been asked before, but what happened to the Psion 6? And now that we have the Revo is this the end of Psions having numbers?" (mickjordan@coltonleeds.freeserve.co.uk)

"Ever since the Organiser 2, it seems that Psion have opted for odd numbers only. Note that there was no Series 4 either." (spam@hotmail.com)

"I have a REVO 8MB UK model. I currently have the following add-ons: Web, OPL+ and its help file, Spell and Thesaurus, and I still have 4MB of memory free." (marouliss@aol.com)

"I have had a Siena for 18 months and thought it pretty good, but with a poor screen. Now my life is complete with a Revo! Small, light and no unnecessary features (for me at least). Ace! Absolutely what I want in a PDA. Just a shame the EPOC software is not always as good as on the old Series 3." (zpat@my-deja.com)

The hot news has been the potential collaboration of 3Com (makers of the Palm range) and Symbian. What can we expect?


freEPOC
freEPOC.de 100% freeware
File
100% Freeware for EPOC devices
Home
About us
About freEPOC
Latest
Software
Downloads
Mailing list
Contact us
freEPOC
freEPOC.de 100% freeware for EPOC systems
Psion
Series 5
Series 5mx
Series 7
About FreEPOC
What We Stand For
FreEPOC is another Epoc Software House - except this one has a difference. Every one of our products is of professional quality, but are not crippled in any way. You are not forced to pay for them. They are not shareware!
But don't think that means that they are in any way not as good as their commercial rivals. They are! Witness Start5, re-creating the Windows Environment on the EPOC platform. Or Adder!, our fast and frantic classic arcade game. Our applications are free, fast and flexible.
Free yourself. Free your palmtop. FreEPOC.

"A Series 9 using Palm Graffiti?" (newsreply@expansys.co.uk)

"I hope the first thing Psion do is bring over all the guys who wrote the Palm synch software and get them to sort out PsiWin." (rjct@bigfoot.com)

"Well, Palm gains a more robust/complete (and 32-bit) operating system kernel and retains the user and application interfaces. Psion retains the operating system kernel and loses the user and application interfaces. When a major shareholder in Symbian (Nokia) drops the standard EPOC user interface in favour of a competitor's, that says a lot." (jfmezei.spamnot@videotron.ca)

With the recent spate of new EPOC machines being released, is there now less new software appearing on the market?

"I hope that Psion have not got any more new machines in the pipeline. I get the feeling that software houses are devoting all their resources into making their software compatible with all the new products, and have given up on developing the applications further for the 5/5mx." (rjct@bigfoot.com)

"They just have to get used to EPOC being a platform and not a single machine. As soon as they write the software a little more flexibly, it should run under a variety of configurations and then things will start to get interesting..." (mhebsacker@email.com)

"I don't want to dwell on this, but at Purple we too have ported some of our apps to both the Revo and the Osaris, so I've probably got more experience that most... In order to utilise the small screen size, various things (e.g. toolbar look and size) have changed on each machine, and these have to be hardwired into the program. We've found through experience that we have to make custom changes to the code for aesthetic reasons—changing icons, menus, dialog widths, button positions, etc. This is all about trying to maximise the use of the product." (j.forrest@dial.pipex.com)

Hints & Tips

Every item published in this section wins the author TWO free issues added to their subscription!

Access denied

In the past, I've had a few 'Access denied' problems when installing standard SIS files directly on my Series 5. It turns out that the 'Control panel | Add/remove' feature (or simply tapping on the SIS file) only works if the file is not write-protected.

Apparently the 'Read-only' flag usually gets set when the SIS file is copied onto the Series 5 from a Windows-based PC's CD-ROM drive. Simply highlight the file and use 'File | Properties' to turn the flag off again.

Tapping on the SIS file should then install the application without further incident.

Sam Knight, Manchester

Hiding Series 3 files

Further to Jeremy Youngmans' suggestion in 'Reducing Series 3 file clutter' on page 101 of issue 24, I have an alternative method. If you want to hide little-used files so they don't appear on your System screen file listings it is even simpler just to create a subdirectory within the usual Data, Sheet or Word directories (such as \DAT\ARCHIVE\) into which you then move any files you don't wish to show on the system screen.

To select any 'archived' files:

1. Press [Tab] under the application Icon.
2. Select the 'archive' sub-directory (e.g. \DAT\ARCHIVE\) and press [Enter].
3. Pick the required file from the list and press [Enter].

This method doesn't require the file extensions to be changed, but has a similar effect.

Charlie Bramley, Alwoodley, Leeds

Odd or even?

If you've ever written a program in OPL and needed to know whether an integer variable was odd or even, try the following handy tip:

If (var% AND 1)=1
then var% is an odd number.

If (var% AND 1)=0
then var% is an even number.

A very useful piece of code that is well worth remembering!

Richard Smedley, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire

Psion-to-Palm data exchange

Many of us have colleagues or friends with Palm III or Palm V organizers. The ability to 'beam' contact information between the Palm's Address Book and the Series 5mx's Contacts application is useful in itself, but can also be used in a wider context.

Say you need to transfer a block of text (in either direction) between the two handhelds. Simply create a new (bogus) entry in Address Book on the Palm or Contacts on the Psion, with an attached note. Inside the note, type or

paste in the block of text you wish to transfer. Now you can use 'Infrared send' (in Psion Contacts) or 'Beam Address' (on the Palm) to transfer the whole entry. Of course, once on the destination handheld it's a simple matter to cut and paste the text into any desired application.

Steve Kostas, Putney, London

PsiWin as a PC file convertor

If you wish to view a file on your PC but don't have the appropriate software, you can convert file formats using Psiwin, provided *it* supports the file types you want to convert from and to. You can either 'copy and convert' it into Psion format and view it on your palmtop first, or 'copy and convert' (or 'move and convert) it then copy back into a viewable file on your PC. For example, if you have a Microsoft Excel (.xls) speadsheet but don't have Excel, simply convert into Psion format and then back to Microsoft Works or another format supported by PsiWin.

Justin King, Dublin, IRELAND

Quick accents

In almost all applications and dialogs on the 5/5mx, a number of common accented characters can be accessed by typing [Fn]+['code'], then the required letter, with 'code' being the letter given below:

[Fn]+[Z] gives umlaut (such as 'ü')

[Fn]+[X] gives a grave (such as 'è')

[Fn]+[C] gives an acute (such as 'é')

[Fn]+[V] gives a tilde (such as 'ñ')

[Fn]+[B] gives a circumflex (such as 'â')

[Fn]+[Q] gives a cedilla (such as 'ç')

Note that this only works for valid accented letters—you can't put an umlaut on a 't', for example.

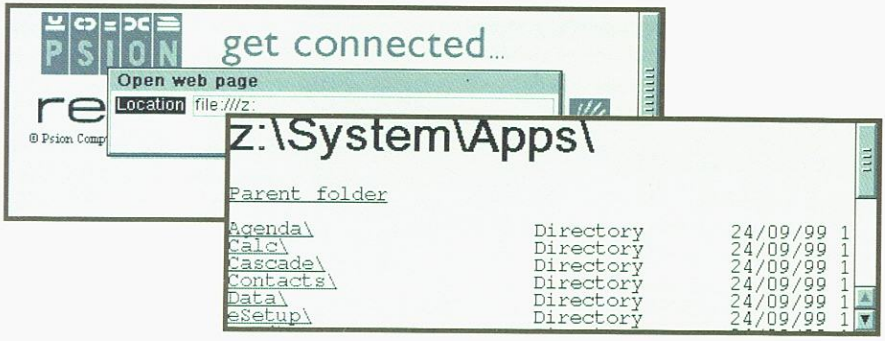
I've painted the symbols onto my keys as I use them a lot—it beats me why Psion don't paint them on as standard!

Name not supplied

Revo ROM browsing

If you installed the Web browser on your Revo, you can just type "file:///z:" into the 'Open web page' dialog, as shown below, and then view your ROM contents from the resulting hypertext screens.

Dave Taylor, Sheffield



Q&A

Get your Psion-related questions answered by our editorial panel...

Beaming crashes?

Q I'm trying to beam my 3Com Palm III's Address Book to Contacts on my new Psion Revo, but seem to have hit a fatal problem. After the beaming operation completes, the Revo's screen freezes and I have to perform a soft reset. Is there any way to prevent this happening?

Dave Kent, Norwich, Norfolk

A **Stop! Don't reset your Revo—the frozen screen is merely a temporary symptom of the fact that Contacts on EPOC machines takes a significant amount of time to process the data after it's received. You will find that by waiting a few minutes, Contacts (and your Address Book contents) should appear with everything present and correct.**

This is one of EPOC's more confusing features. By not including an hourglass icon in their operating system you are left guessing as to whether the palmtop has crashed or is still processing data.

Imported wallpaper?

Q Issue 24 mentioned that it's possible to change the 5mx wallpaper by using a file from Sketch. I have a photo stored as a file on my digital camera in JPG format. How do I import it into Sketch so I can then save it as wallpaper?

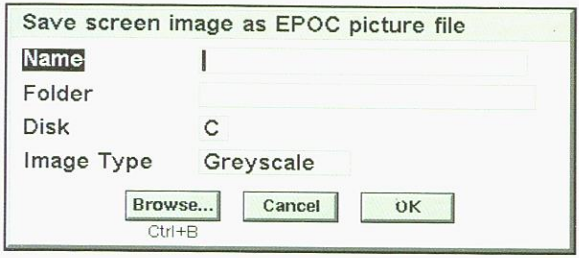
Edmond Rose, London

A **There are two ways of doing this, one requiring a PC and another (more elaborate) that doesn't. Firstly, with a PC:**

1. **Copy the JPG (JPEG) file to your PC.**
2. **Use the shareware Paintshop Pro (or any other image conversion utility) to resample or resize the image to your palmtop screen size (e.g. 640 x 240 for the Series 5mx or MC218) and save it as a Windows Bitmap (BMP) file.**
3. **In Windows Explorer, drag and drop the BMP file into a suitable folder on the palmtop. PsiWin's convertors will create a Sketch file of the same name.**
4. **Open the file in Sketch and use the 'Save as System wallpaper...' command.**

Secondly, using just the Series 5mx:

1. **Open the JPG file in the Web application. You may wish to turn off both toolbars, plus the location and scrollbars, in order to see as much of your image as possible.**



'Grabbing' a screen on the Series 5. Incidentally, to take a screen grab on the Series 3, just press [Psion]+[Shift]+[Control]+[S] to create a file called SCREEN.PIC in the root of the C drive

2. Press [Shift]+[Ctrl]+[Fn]+[S] to 'grab' the screen as an 'EPOC picture' file.
3. Fire up Sketch and use the 'Merge in...' command. In the resulting dialog select file type 'EPOC picture' and then select the file you created earlier.
4. Use the 'Save as System wallpaper...' command, as before.

Monday morning blues

Q In my Agenda's week view, the first day of the week on display is Monday. Can you tell me how to change this to another day?

Sunny Ng, London

A Rather unintuitively, this has to be changed from 'Control panel | International | Date', rather than from within Agenda. You can in fact choose to start the week from *any* day.

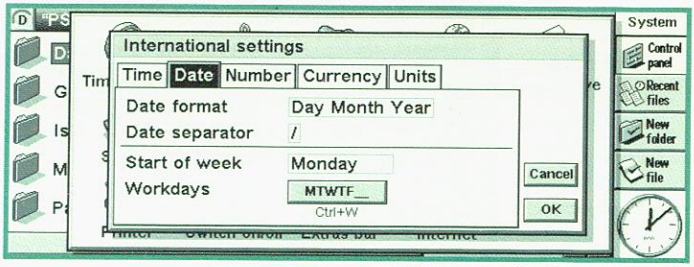
Annoying alarms

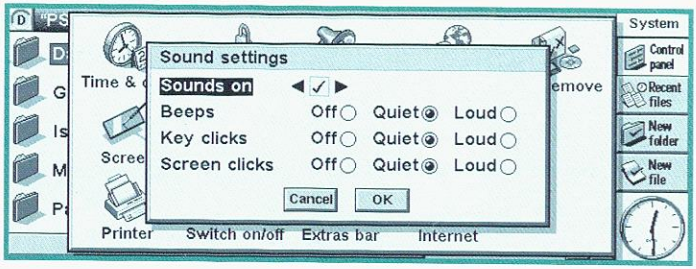
Q How can I set my Series 5 alarms so that they don't ring endlessly in my locker while I'm playing squash or in the gym? Can't it just be set to pop up a reminder of all my outstanding alarms when next turned on?

Htun Hlaing, Harare, ZIMBABWE

A The usual way to solve this problem is to go into 'Control panel | Sound' and switch all sounds off before leaving your palmtop. When you eventually return and power up your machine, any alarms which have 'sounded' in your absence will be shown and require acknowledging, one by one, with the [Esc] key. Do remember, of course, to turn sounds back on again afterwards, in case you miss your next early morning wake-up call. Note also that there are third-party utilities (such as Crontab, discussed in issue 25, page 86) to do this and other simple opera-

Start your week whenever you choose—but not from within Agenda!





Turn all sounds off temporarily if you want to avoid being disturbed

tions automatically, perhaps re-enabling sounds at midnight.

Individual alarms can of course be set to show a visual reminder only, by setting the alarm sound to 'Silent'.

Removing Sheet passwords

Q Once I've set a password within a Sheet file is there any way to subsequently remove it? Whenever I invoke the password dialog it always seems to require an alternative word.

Len Mitchell, Hereford

A Yes. In the 'Set password' dialog, just leave both password fields blank and tap on 'OK'. Your file will then be unprotected.

This is a good trick to remember and will usually work for many other computer systems and applications.

Tidy mind, tidy Agenda?

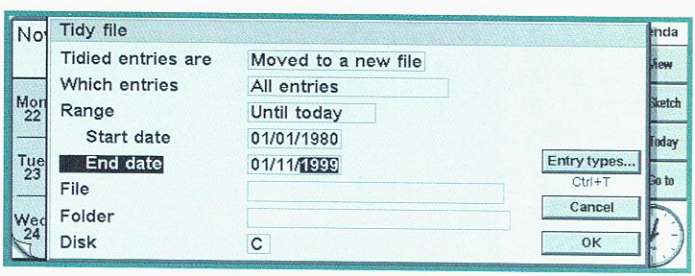
Q I find that saving To-do list entries is taking progressively longer each time. Do I need to do a soft reset of my Series 5mx?

Jonathan Challis, Newcastle Upon Tyne

A Forget the reset. Assuming that you're not low on free memory, you can usually improve Agenda's responsiveness within the application itself.

Use the 'Tidy/archive file...' to delete or move to a new file those entries and appointments that are expired or you no longer need. Having done this, your Agenda file will need compressing, to reclaim the space taken up by the deleted entries. Normally EPOC will automatically compress Data and Agenda files when they grow beyond a certain multiple of their optimal size. You can also force this compression manually using one of

Tidying your Agenda from time to time will help to keep things running at optimum speed



many simple third-party utilities, e.g. Compactor, by Daniel Sissman.

My vanishing world

Q When I had a series 3a I kept a separate 'World' file containing details of various extra city locations around the world.

When I changed to the 5mx I found I couldn't transfer this file, so laboriously entered all the cities again. Within a few weeks, for an unknown reason, my 5mx locked-up, and I had to resort to a hard reset—losing all the extra city details I'd entered.

Psion tell me that on the 5mx I cannot back up the information on extra countries or cities I put in. Is this true, or does anyone know better?

Jonathan Thomas, Sutton, Surrey

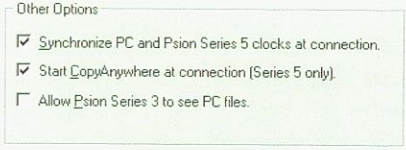
A **The person you spoke to is mistaken. The information is all stored in a file called WLD_DATA.DBW, in the \System\Data folder. This should be backed up with your other files, and can be restored as necessary.**

Mysterious beeps?

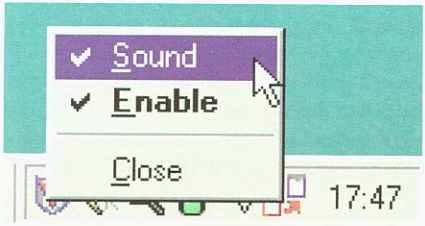
Q When my Series 5 is connected to a PC it beeps every so often, for no apparent reason. What's going on?

Charles Wright, Rotterdam, THE NETHERLANDS

A **You probably have PsiWin's 'CopyAnywhere' feature enabled, which lets you copy clipboard contents freely between Psion and PC. Every time you copy or cut something to the PC clipboard the Psion will bleep. You can disable the CopyAnywhere feature if you're not making use of it, from 'My Psion | Properties | Connections', unticking the 'Start CopyAnywhere at Startup' as shown below.**


Other Options
Synchronize PC and Psion Series 5 clocks at connection.
Start CopyAnywhere at connection (Series 5 only).
Allow Psion Series 3 to see PC files.

If you want to use CopyAnywhere, but without the sound, then right-click on the CopyAnywhere icon and untick 'Sound' as shown below.



Don't forget that you can submit your tips or questions by normal mail to the address given on page 1, or alternatively by email, to editor@palmtop.co.uk . Please be sure to put "Tips" or "Q&A" in the 'subject' line of your email.

Musings...

Steve Clack looks at the rise of the stylish little Revo, and the final demise of our much-loved Series 3

When I first saw a prototype of the new Revo on a visit to Psion some months ago, I have to say that I *wasn't* impressed. The case construction was decidedly low-grade plastic with a particularly tacky chrome-effect surround around the murky screen, plus the keys appeared to have virtually no travel at all. To cap it all, the machine was originally to be called the 'Shelley'—rather less exciting than the catchy 'Revo' title they eventually decided on.

Psion, with the aid of their various industrial design consultants, have always managed to come up with an innovatively-engineered palmtop. The almost timeless styling of the original Series 3 helped to keep the product selling successfully over the course of no fewer than four versions and eight years, with little more than a token change of logo and casing colour. Externally, the brick-like square lines of the Series 5 lacked the smooth soap-bar stylishness of its SIBO predecessor, but the neat arrangement of the voice recording buttons and ingenious slide-out keyboard mechanism ensured that Psion continued to win the usual array of coveted design awards.

Good and solid though it is, the bigger Series 7 is unlikely to win such awards, being too conventional to raise eyebrows. The Revo, however, should bring things back into line, with its sleek curves, classy two-tone finish and a docking station that looks like a soap dish straight out of Star Trek.

Revo-lution

Anyway, I was pleasantly surprised when a final production Revo landed on my desk recently. All my previous hardware criticisms had been answered and I was surprised to find the keyboard at least two-thirds as good as the legendary Series 5's, with a delightfully crisp, clear screen—surely a revolution for recent Psion palmtops?

Having only faxed from my Series 5 perhaps twice in my entire life I didn't (personally) miss this facility and with my own use of the Sketch application being similarly rare I found little to criticise, apart from the price.

Close, but no cigar

£300 for a machine with no expandability and no backlight? Are Psion *really* on the same planet as the rest of us? At £220 including a backlight I could have seen them flying off the shelves at prodigious speed—perhaps we'll see at least a modest price reduction before too long.

Psion have often shown a "We know best" attitude when it comes to features, with "*You don't really need a backlight*", "*You don't really need a colour screen*" and "*You don't need*

better screen contrast" being some of the more notable classics. Back on Earth, I spent a day rampaging around the office, declaring what a resounding success I thought the Revo would be. Sadly, I sat at home on the sofa that evening under subdued domestic lighting, only to find the Revo screen had become effectively invisible. Those pale grey keys were still perfectly clear, but the lack of a backlight rendered the Revo useless for any kind of nocturnal work, at least in *our* household.

In some ways, getting the mix 95 percent right is more frustrating than producing a machine with no appeal at all. I *know* that I don't want a bulky Windows CE machine and I *know* I can't use a 3Com Palm organiser to compose article drafts and other long documents. The Revo comes tantalisingly close to what I need for many tasks, all wrapped up in a delightfully stylish package that never requires me to purchase another AA battery. For the want of a backlight the machine is locked out from almost a third of my waking life, unless I either equip the entire house with a bevy of high-power 100 watt lightbulbs or invest in a miner's helmet.

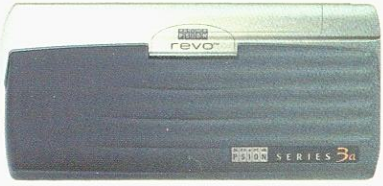
Goodbye old friend

The demise of the Series 3 that has accompanied the Revo release is a point of nostalgia for all Psion veterans. Many *Palmtop* readers owned a Series 3 for some years, and many more still actively use them. In spite of the inevitable hails of protest from Series 3 users, the writing has been on the wall for some months now, regardless of the relatively recent release of the 3mx. Despite some (often overstated) limitations and omissions, the newer EPOC operating system is largely faster and more sophisticated, and sports a modern filing system that is more intuitive to desktop computer users.

Although the Revo in many ways constitutes an appropriate replacement for the Series 3 within Psion's product range, there's still little reason for contented Series 3 users to make the change. If you already have a machine that does what *you* require of it, then there's nothing more to be said. Period.

Keep on running

Reliability of Psion hardware has often been more of an issue than it ought to be, so if you're a dedicated Series 3 user with a definite aversion to EPOC then be sure to nurse your palmtop carefully over the coming years, or you may be *forced* to change it at such point that spare parts are no longer available. Alternatively, get yourself a spare machine while there are still some around. One thing's for sure, you can't have *mine*.



UseNet Groups

comp.sys.psion.announce
comp.sys.psion.misc
comp.sys.psion.comm
comp.sys.psion.apps
comp.sys.psion.programmer
comp.sys.psion.marketplace
comp.sys.psion.reviews

These newsgroups are the unmoderated discussion groups on the Internet. It's easiest to access them via a desktop machine using Microsoft or Netscape web browsers (choose 'Read newsgroups' or similar on their menu), but there's now also a dedicated EPOC newsreader, RMRNews, which you can download from *www.rmrsoft.com* .

There are also digests, with daily messages sent by email. Subscribe to the Series 5 version at *www.pinkworks.com/pda/s5list.html* .

Proprietary discussion forums

AOL - Psion Noticeboard	Psion/General noticeboard - Keyword: Psion
CiX Psion conference	join psion join cixed

Psion-related software

3-Lib shareware library	*3lib.ukonline.co.uk*
CiX	'join psion', then look in '/files' and '/s5_files' file lists
CompuServe	GO PSION
EPOC Software	*www.epocsoftware.com*
Palmtop Software Directory	*www.palmtop.co.uk/softsubp.htm*
Plus, of course, the Palmtop CD	See page 111.

Psion FAQ

The Series 3 and Series 5 Frequently Asked Questions documents contain useful information, facts, names, addresses and numbers:

www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/8130/faq.htm

World Wide Web sites

Information

3-Lib	*3lib.ukonline.co.uk*
Armlink	*www.armlink.ndirect.co.uk*
Palmtop magazine	*www.palmtop.co.uk*
PocketInfo	*www.pocketinfo.org*
Psion	*www.psion.com*
Symbian	*www.symbian.com*

News

PDA News	*news.tucows.com/pdanews*
EPOC News	*www.epocnews.com*
EPOC Zone	*www.epoczone.com*

Software houses

Atelier	*www.atelier.tm*
Beelogic	*www.beelogic.com*
FreEPOC	*www.freepoc.de*
Neuon	*www.neuon.com*
Palmscape	*www.palmscape.com*
Palmtime	*www.shoresystems.net/palmtime*
Palmtop Software (formerly BV)	*www.palmtopsoftware.com*
Purple Software	*www.purplesoft.com*
RMR Software	*www.rmrsoft.com*

Miscellaneous

Directory of software authors	*3lib.ukonline.co.uk/authors.htm*
Epocalypse	*www.washuu.net*
FoxPop	*www.foxpop.ndirect.co.uk*
Online with your Psion	*ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Jochen_Siegenthaler (currently offline)*
Psion medical	*dnausers.d-n-a.net/dnethWMo/psionmed.htm*
The Flip Side	*3lib.ukonline.co.uk/flipside/flipside.htm*

Search engines

Googol	www.googol.net
Psion Websearches	*psion.websearches.net*

Problems with your Psion?

Here are some useful guidelines if you think you may have a hardware problem with your Psion palmtop:

Things to check

Before even thinking of picking up the phone, make sure you've checked the following, if only to save your own embarrassment if it turns out to be something easy to solve:

- Are the main batteries OK? The Psion's own battery information option (from the System screen menu) will give you an indication of their health, otherwise you might want to invest in a cheap battery tester. If in doubt, replace them with brand new 'alkaline' batteries. Note that rechargeable batteries have a much shorter life and do not always give accurate readings with the Psion's own battery checker.
- If the screen appears to be faulty, it could be that the contrast just needs adjusting. If set to minimum you will have a blank screen, whereas maximum will give you an all-black screen. To adjust the contrast on a Series 3, hold down [Psion]+[.], on the Series 5, it's [Fn]+[.]
- Is the screen calibration OK? (Series 5 only). Go into 'Control panel | Screen' and recalibrate it.
- Have you tried resetting the Psion? If it's still possible to backup the unit, do so again unless you know you have a very recent backup. Then try a 'soft' reset. If that doesn't sort things out, try a 'hard' reset (see the manual for details on how to do this). If neither work, it's always worth unhooking all cables, removing all the batteries (AAs and backup cell) and any CompactFlash card in the CF bay, leaving for 30 minutes. Put the batteries back in and try again, restoring your data if the Psion comes back to life.

Checks complete, but the fault is still there?

If all the above advice fails to help, it's best to contact the experts. If outside the UK, you'll have to contact your local distributors for support options. You can find a list of worldwide service agents at *www.psion.com/international*. If within the UK, read on...

Machine repairs

If your machine has developed a hardware fault, you may find that your supplier (particularly if a High Street store) may have an arrangement for replacing your faulty machine. However, most people get their units repaired either by Psion themselves or by POS Ltd. If your Psion is still covered by the 12 month warranty, you should definitely contact Psion. If it is older than a year then you have a choice, although prices are generally similar between the two.

Repairs by Psion

The Psion repair centre can be contacted by telephone on 0181 575 9919, or by email at

uk-repair@psion.com

If in the UK send the broken palmtop by Registered post or by courier, to:

Psion UK Repair Centre
Unit 6 Derby Road
Metropolitan Centre
Greenford
Middlesex
UB6 8UJ

Psion do not guarantee to save data that may be on your machine, so it is important to backup your data first if at all possible. You should remove the batteries (if your data is safe), stylus and SSDs/CFs. Package the machine securely, and enclose a covering letter describing the fault and supplying a daytime phone number and delivery address.

Remember to keep a note of your machine's serial number, as you may need to quote this if contacting Psion.

- On a Series 3 Classic, this is on the bottom of the machine on a sticker surrounding the speaker, beginning with the letters 'EBA'.
- On a Series 3a the number is on a transparent label inside the 'A' drive compartment, beginning 'FBA', 'FBB', etc.
- On a 3c it is in the same place as the 3a, but on a silver sticker with a barcode on it: beginning with 'JBB', 'JBC', etc.
- On a 3mx it is in the same place as the 3a, but on a silver sticker with a barcode on it: beginning with 'LB', etc.
- A Siena has its serial number underneath the front AAA battery, beginning 'HBB' or 'HBC'.
- The Series 5 has its serial number on a sticker with a barcode either inside the compartment with the backup battery or in the 'D' drive compartment, beginning with 'KA00', 'KB00', etc.

Attach some proof of purchase if the repair is a warranty job. Psion will acknowledge receipt of the palmtop into their system, billing you if the repair is chargeable, and will usually return the fixed unit within about a week, by courier.

Technical support

If you have a software or operational problem, you may wish to contact Psion's Technical Support department—see our news item on page 4 for current rates. If you have access to the Internet, then you will find the answer to many common questions and problems at *www.psion.com/support* .

Repairs by POS Ltd

POS Ltd. offer a similar postal service (contact them for details), plus 'while you wait' repairs at their high street shop at 143 Streatham High Road, London SW16 6EG. Providing you've booked an appointment, repairs can generally be done on the spot in 1-2 hours.

Telephone POS Ltd. on 0181 677 9246

Using the Palmtop CD-ROM

- **Windows** users who receive the CD should double-click on the file 'Start.htm'. On most PCs the web browser will leap into life and display the CD interface. If nothing happens, or if Windows asks how the file should be displayed, cancel the operation and install a 'web browser' application such as Microsoft Internet Explorer or Netscape (these can be found on almost all PC magazine cover CDs). After installation, try double-clicking on 'Start.htm' again.

  Please note that your operating system may set all files retrieved from the CD to 'Read-only'. This shouldn't cause a problem for 99% of applications, but you may have to manually change file properties (e.g. use [Control]+[P] on the Series 5 itself) if you have problems with running or removing software.

  Those who install a new web browser should note that it often comes with its default start page set to the maker's web site, meaning that it tries to go online. Just go into its 'View|Options' dialog (or similar) and set the start page to a file local to your computer (e.g. the *Palmtop* CD Start.htm file).

- **Macintosh** users should simply drag the 'start.htm' file onto their web browser, where it will load the interface just as on a PC. Please note that the Psion screen saver, demos and Emulators are all designed to run on PCs, so they will not work directly on your Mac. The latest CDs also come with a Mac-specific start page.

- **DOS** and **Amiga** owners may be restricted in what they can view on the CD, but will still be able to browse the 3-Lib library section and copy off the software as needed.

- Users of **RISC OS** machines have had a few problems with the 'Joliet' format used on the Palmtop CD-ROM. Fortunately that has now been resolved, and users of those machines can now access all of the web sites on the CD without getting error messages (although they obviously won't be able to run any of the applications). All that's needed is a copy of Warm Silence Software's CDROMFS. For more details, contact Warm Silence Software Ltd, PO Box 28, Woodstock, Oxfordshire, OX20 1XX. Tel: 0585 487642, Tel/Fax: 01608 737172 or see their web site at *www.wss.co.uk* .

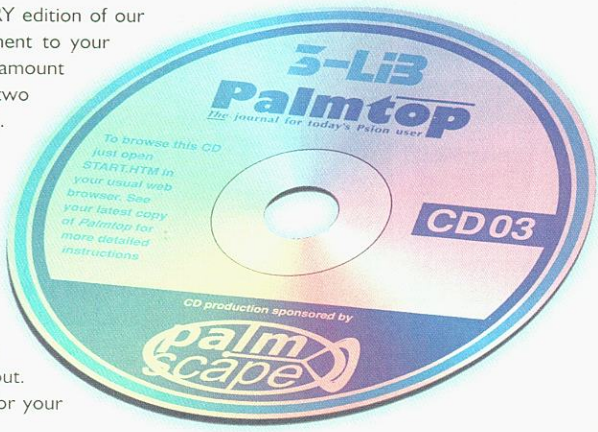
  RISC OS users will also find that the copy of the ArmLink web site on the CD contains PsiFS, a free application they can use to transfer files between their palmtop and desktop machines.

Palmtop

CD Plus

CALL our order hotline on 01869 249287

For readers who wish to receive EVERY edition of our CD, you can now take out a supplement to your subscription whereby you pay an extra amount to get SIX CDs (approximately every two months, but separate to the magazine). The extra cost for this is £20 in the UK, £25 elsewhere. If you wish to take up this option then simply contact us at the address given on page 1.

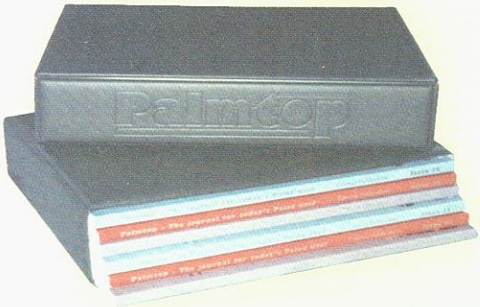

5-LIB
Palmtop
The journal for today's Psion user
To browse this CD just open START.HTM in your usual web browser. See your latest copy of Palmtop for more detailed instructions
CD03
CD production sponsored by
palm scape

• The CD is re-pressed and updated APPROXIMATELY every two months, but this will vary. We have a standard number of CDs pressed every time, and update it every time we run out. In any case you will receive SIX CDs for your money.

• Note that the majority of the content does not change from disk to disk. As an example, CD06 had about 100 new and updated programs that were not on CD05, from a total of over 2000.

Alternatively, you can always buy single copies of the latest Palmtop CD for £10 each (including worldwide postage). See our contact details on page 1, or order direct from our web site, on *www.palmtop.co.uk*

Keep 'em SMART!



Keep your issues of Palmtop clean and smart inside these attractive slip cases. Each one holds SIX issues of the magazine, and is produced in two-tone padded grey vinyl with our logo embossed on the spine

Only £5 each in the UK, £6 elsewhere (all prices include VAT and postage)

The complete solution for Psion users...

local service...worldwide *local service...worldwide* *local service...worldwide* *local service...worldwide*

Specialist advice, sales and support for full range of Psion machines, for both the individual and corporate user

Full range of accessories, from the largest capacity memory cards to the latest Dacom PCMCIA modems

Full range of adaptors, cables and software

Mobile communications solutions for most phones, via cable or infrared dataphone

Extensive range of upgrades for most TDK / Nokia / Psion Dacom cards

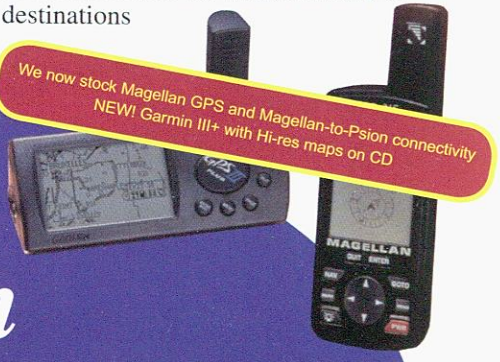
GPS units, software and connectivity to 5 and 3 Series machines always available

Official distributor for all Covertec products, from the proven range of rugged belt cases to the stylish and exclusive Covertec Deluxe wallets - the ultimate case for every occasion

Next day a.m. delivery (UK) subject to availability

Fully insured express and courier services available to most worldwide destinations

We now stock Magellan GPS and Magellan-to-Psion connectivity
NEW! Garmin III+ with Hi-res maps on CD



P.O. Box 3465, Southbourne, Bournemouth, BH6 3YF ENGLAND

Tel: 01202 422 570

Fax: 01202 422 870

Email: exportech@compuserve.com

Exportech

Visit our website at ***www.exportech.co.uk***

...from one of Europe's leading Psion providers

EXPORTECH

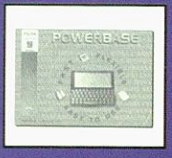
local service...worldwide *local service...worldwide* *local service...worldwide* *local service...worldwide*

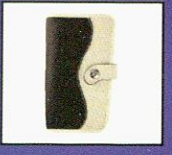
GSM Nota - dedicated comms module for Psion 5/5mx and Nokia 6110 users

- Direct link to Psion 5 for email, fax and web access
- Independently powered by 2x AAA1.5v batteries
- No software required to load and configure
- Works on any standard GSM network worldwide!
- Only £115 + VAT

PEGASUS II 56k V.90 modem

- Data throughput up to 115.2Kbps
- Fax up to 14.4 Kbps
- Compact (100x70x25mm) and light (110g) - the perfect "travel modem"!
- Use the same modem for Psion 3c, 3mx, 5, 5mx, Palm, PC* and Mac (*optional kit available)
- Complete with 100-230V switch-mode power supply (separate battery pack also available)
- Only £99 + VAT!





PsionEx

Second User Exchange Service

Voice mail: 01522 811707 (Replies within 24Hrs)

Email: matt@psionex.co.uk
Web: www.psionex.co.uk

Please note NEW email and web address!

VISA

HARDWARE		We Buy	We Sell
Siena	512K	£30	£70
	1MB	£35	£80
Series 3a	512K	£35	£85
	1MB	£40	£95
	2MB	£45	£115
Series 3c	1MB	£45	£115
	backlit/2MB	£50	£135
	3mx	£70	£150
Series 5	8MB	£120	£240
	5mx	£220	£350

COMMS		We Buy	We Sell
Serial Cable	3a	£15	£35
PsiWin+cables	3a (v1.0)	£15	£45
	mx/5 (v2.2)	£10	£35
Printer link	3a	£1	£7
	3c/mx/S5	£10	£25
3Fax	3a	£20	£50
Travel Modem	3c/mx/S5	£30	£75
PsiFax s/w	S3 disk	£5	£25
PsiMail Internet	S3 disk	£10	£35
PC card modem ad.	3a	£30	£70

NEW updated WEB page!

MISC		We Buy	We Sell
AC adaptor	3a/3c	£1	£10
Leather case		£2-5	£5-20
Programming manual		£1	£6
Cyclone External Floppy (3a)		£20	£50

MEMORY		We Buy	We Sell
Flash SSD	512K	£10	£30
	1MB	£25	£55
	2MB	£40	£85
Ram SSD	512K	£15	£45
	1MB	£30	£65
CFlash Disk (S5)	4MB	£10	£25
	12MB	£20	£45
	32MB	£30	£65

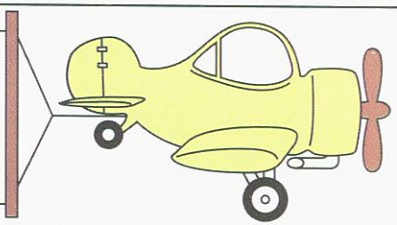
SOFTWARE - 3 Series		We Buy	We Sell
Act for Psion	SSD	£5	£25
Autoroute Express	SSD	£3	£15
Berlitz Int/Phrase	SSD	£3	£15
Games 1/2/3a	SSD	£2	£10
Money	SSD	£2	£15
Scrabble	SSD	£3	£15

SOFTWARE - 5 Series		We Buy	We Sell
5Pack	Disk	£10	£25
Arcade Games	Disk	£5	£15
Backgammon	CD	£10	£30
Berlitz Phrase Book	Disk	£10	£25
Collins Dictionary	CD	£10	£30
Chess	CD	£10	£30
Money	CD	£12	£37
Navigator	Disk	£5	£15
Route Planner	CD	£10	£30
Other titles available!		£phone	£phone

Terms and conditions: All equipment supplied with 3 month guarantee. FREE carriage within UK for orders over £20. We only purchase items in full working order, without cosmetic damage. Buying prices apply to items with original boxes & manuals. Up to 20% discount may apply to equipment not meeting these standards. 3% surcharge applied to credit cards. Prices correct at time of going to press. Offers subject to change without notice.

Ben Vaughan

presents



Reversi	Golf Pro
Fruit Crazy	Bio Base
Tile Trix	Connect 4
Psi-Jong	Robo Dungeon
War	Light Cycles
Casino Blackjack	LEM
	Lights off

To receive all these and more on a PC HD 3.5" disk, send £5 cash, cheque or postal order to:

B Vaughan
25 Upper Bevendean Avenue
Brighton
East Sussex BN2 4FG
England

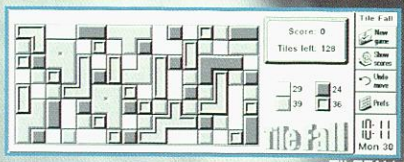
Most titles available for 3a/3c/Siena and Series 5
Download from http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/B_Vaughan

Daring to be Different...

DOODLER

"The" graphical jotter

"SameGame" with a difference

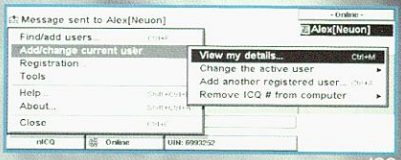


TILEFALL

Customisng your Psion was never easier...

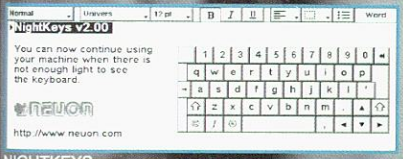
MERLIN

"The" instant messaging solution



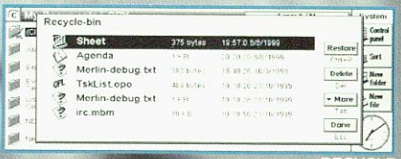
nICQ

"The" ultimate nighttime utility


NightKeys v2.00
You can now continue using your machine when there is not enough light to see the keyboard.
neuon
http://www.neuon.com

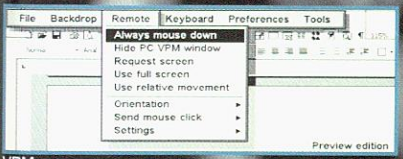
NIGHTKEYS

"The" recycle bin for EPOC



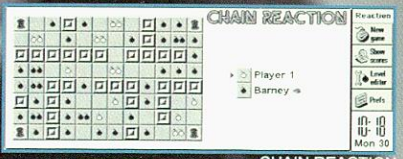
RECYCLE

"The" virtual Psion mouse



VPM

Action packed strategy game



CHAIN REACTION

Tetris meets Columns meets Chain Reaction

BLOBS

All of our programs can be downloaded from our website for evaluation purposes, or emailed to you upon request.

Email: info@neuon.com

http://www.neuon.com

neuon

Take the Future in hand

FOR SALE, WANTED, ETC...

Subject to available space this personal classified advertisement page is available free of charge as a courtesy to subscribers. It can only be used for Psion-related items. Please contact the Editor (see page 1 for address details) directly to submit your ads.

This service is not available to non-subscribers, nor to Psion dealers. We bear no liability for items bought or sold from this page.

Series 5 (8MB, ROM 1.01) - £125. Ericsson D127 infrared modem - £45. SimCity - £21. Phoneman - £7. Will sell separately, or as complete package for £185.
Contact Mark Armitage on 01926-336111 (office) or 01926-612368 (evenings)
Email mark@marmitage. freeserve.co.uk

Series 5 (8MB) - £200, Systemlink deluxe case - £20. All include postage.
Contact Craig Ward on 01604 768713
Email craigward@psion.net

Purple Navigator - £15, Powerbase £30, Expense manager £20, Psion parallel printer cable - £15, Garmin GPS 12 with Series 5 cable - £60.
Fax Peter Taylor on 01386 871601
Email pjt@petet.force9.co.uk

Series 5 (8MB), leather case, mains adaptor, printer cable, Palmtop Money software, 2 spare styli - £275 including postage.
Contact Jon Lassman on 01273 411114 or 020 8587 8897
Email jonathan.Lassman@bt.com

Black leather 'zip and flip leather case for Psion palmtops - £30 ono, Series 3 3-Fax software on SSD with Pace Microlin V27 modem - £30.
Contact Mike Prior on 01993 708547

Series 5 (8MB) plus leather zip case - £175.
Contact David Jay on 01702 476205
Email david.jay1@virgin.net

Psion Expense Tracker - £10, Vodaphone Telenote Link for Nokia 2110 or Philips PR747 - £10, Psion 3a SMS Link for Nokia 2110/2110i and Philips PR747 - £10, Psion 3a RS232 link with Mac software - £18, Psion 3a RS232 link with PC connector - £22, Series 3 Financial Calculator - £12. All prices include postage.
Contact Anna Newman-Brown on 01234 856070

PC Card Modem Adaptor, still under guarantee - £50. Psion Dacom GSM Gold Card for Nokia 8110 still under guarantee - £50.
Contact Andy Palmer on 01642 804484
Email: andyp@littlep.idps.co.uk

Series 5 (8MB) in original packaging with manuals. £250 ono. Contact Chris Kelly on 07801 191848
Email Kelly_Chris_D@hotmail.com

Ericsson DI27 infrared modem - £40
Contact Derek Mackay on 01224 723797

TANTRONICS LIMITED

Battery Products

High Power Alkaline AA	4 Pack	£1.28
High Power Alkaline AA	40 Box	£11.52
950mAh NiCd Rechargeable AA	4 Pack	£4.67
1300mAh NiMh Rechargeable AA	2 Pack	£2.98
5/GeoFox Lithium Backup CR2032	Each	£0.98
5/GeoFox Lithium Backup CR2032	5 Pack	£3.92
NiCd/NiMh Charger	From	£12.76

Check our website to see how leading brands of batteries compare when used in the Series5/5mx

Point5 - The Aluminium Stylus for the Series 5, 5mx and MC218

£8.94
All prices subject to VAT

Silver - Violet - Turquoise - Green - Gold - Red

On-Line Ordering at – http://www.tantronics.co.uk or call – 01625 260837

Lowest prices for all memory cards and memory accessories for Psion 5, PDAs, Digital Cameras, etc. We supply worldwide, CF cards, CF card readers, CF card adaptors, SM cards, SM card readers, SM card adaptors.

CF cards suitable for Psion Series 5:

8MB CF card £31.00 | 16MB CF card £41.00 | 32MB CF card £69.00 | 48MB CF card £108.00
64MB CF card £122.00 | 80MB CF card £154.00 | CF card reader (parallel port) £53.00
CF card to PCMCIA adaptor £10.00

Psion 5mx £392 inclusive, 5mx+flash card - contact us for extra special deals...

UK / WORLDWIDE orders despatched SAME DAY
Payment by credit card/debit card NO SURCHARGE
ALL items NEW, fully guaranteed

All pricing above includes next day delivery and VAT to mainland UK. For overseas enquiries/pricing please contact us or visit our web site for more details

LOWEST mail order prices - and that s guaranteed!

We value your business, and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Prices and stock subject to change without notice.

MOBILE-IT (UK)
Tel: 0181 657 3220
Fax: 0181 651 3313

Web: www.mobile-it.co.uk (secure credit card ordering)
Email: info@mobile-it.co.uk

The Difference is clear

The Difference is you!

£65 we supply and fit

custom colours can also be made to order!

Tel: 0181 677 9246 **Fax: 0181 769 9293**

sales@posltd.com **www.posltd.com**

POS

Repairs, technical support, training and sales

INDEPENDENT PSION Service Centre

The Registration Network

Download Anywhere, Purchase Here

Your Psion Psoftware Psource

www.reg.net

More Than 4000 Titles Online... Over 400 Psion Applications Available

Searchable Software Database

Easy Online & Phone Ordering 24 Hours A Day

Instant Download & Quick Delivery

Secure Payment Options

RMR Software

www.rmrsoft.com

Providers of high quality shareware for the EPOC Machines. (Series 5/5mx/Geofox-One/Ericsson MC218), Series 3mx/3c/3a, S3 Classic and Siena, as well as the Acorn Pocketbook, and resources for EPOC/SIBO developers.

www.i27.com

5Talk v1.04 - A talking clock that can be activated even when the Series 5 is switched off.

PopUp v2.21 - A scrollable PopUp menu for use in your apps.

balchie

freespace.virgin.net/richard.balch

Quiklist - Fast, Powerful ToDo and List Manager for the Series 5

MxContacts - Series 5 data to 5mx Contacts Conversion Utility

ZEBRA FILM

www.zebra-film.com

Filmcalculator (Psion Series 3/5) The Filmcalculator for the Psion palmtop computer is a tool for cameramen, photographers, camera-assistants and gaffers. Helps with all calculations in preparation and while shooting.

Pimlico Software, Inc.

www.gorilla-haven.org/pimlico

MonthVu - Month-at-a-glance View

QuikNote - Quick Note taker

XpensEZ - Expense & Time Billing Manager

Developers, increase your sales overnight!

It's Fast, Secure, & Easy. No Set-Up Fees, No Hidden Charges!

Register today at: www.reg.net/psion/apply.asp

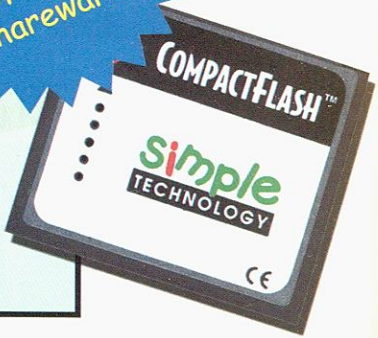
FINGER
Technology Limited

- We are specialists in handheld computing and technology
- We aim to supply our products at the lowest delivered prices

CFs come pre-loaded with ALL RMR Software's shareware!

We supply:

- Psion machines
- Software, including accounts, connectivity, utilities, mapping and games
- Modems
- Accessories
- Cases



We are happy to supply free technical support to all our customers. We will also load software for FREE for our customers!

Our advertised prices are all inclusive

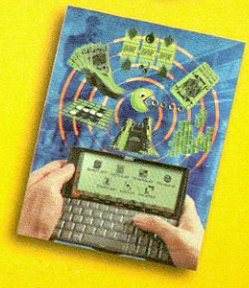
Finger Technology Limited
Tel: 01923 28 98 78
Fax: 01923 469 461
www: http://www.fingertech.co.uk
E-mail: sales@fingertech.co.uk
4 Lamorna Close, Radlett, Herts WD7 7DR

Previously known as Sagwen CF Cards

WIDGET SOFTWARE

'The Psion Specialist'

- **Widest range of software and accessories** including Leisure Pack, Agenda Link, Timebase, Carrying cases, Desk and Car Stands, Screen protector, 2 in 1 Pen/Stylus, Quick Reference Guides and up to 64Mb Compact Flash.
- Data transfer and software copying services onto Compact Flash.
- FREE copy of our Newsletter. Fill in the coupon below and fax it to Widget in UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France and Germany or visit http://www.widgetsoftware.com.



Widget Software Ltd.
121 London Rd, Knebworth,
Herts., SG3 6EX, UK.
Switchboard: +44 (0)1438 818 800
Direct Sales Tel: +44 (0)1438 818 818
Fax: +44 (0)1438 815 222
Email: info@widget.co.uk
Website: www.widget.co.uk

Widget Distribution Services
WDS is the exclusive distributor for several third party products in the UK. WDS welcomes all trade enquiries for all products produced for the Psion platform.
Dealer Tel: +44 (0)1438 818 811
Export Tel: +44 (0)1438 818 809
Fax: +44 (0)1438 815 222

Widget Software Canada Inc.
1370 Don Mills Rd, Don Mills
Ontario M3B 3N7, Canada
Tel: 1-877-PALMTOP
Tel: +1 416 449 2331
Fax: +1 416 441 0591
Email: widget@idirect.com

Widget Australia Pty Ltd.
PO Box 215, Ourimbah
NSW 2258, Australia
Tel: +61 (0)2 4362 2594
Fax: +61 (0)2 4362 2251
Email: handheld@widget.com.au

Widget New Zealand Ltd.
PO Box 44 070, Lower Hutt
New-Zealand
Tel: +64 (0)4 560 4553
Fax: +64 (0)4 569 6452
Email: sales@widget.co.nz
Website: www.widget.co.nz

Widget Deutschland
Ober-Rodener-Strasse 89
63110 Rodgau, Germany
Tel: +49 (0)6106 808915
Fax: +49 (0)6106 808929
Website: www.widget.de

Widget France
31 Avenue du Général Leclerc
92100 Boulogne, France
Tel: +33 (0)1 46 10 00 77
Fax: +33 (0)1 46 21 26 66
Website: www.widget-france.com

Widget Holland
Grote Tocht 25F
1507 CG Zaandam
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 75 614 6166
Fax: +31 75 617 3958

Name_____

Address_____

City_____

Country_____ ❑ I am a reseller

pod
Pod Limited

Psion 5/5mx
Docking Station

- ☑ Easy docking
- ☑ Includes combined power & communications cable
- ☑ Around UK£30

Car Stand

- ☑ Holds your Psion securely
- ☑ No drilling - attaches to air vents
- ☑ Around UK£30

Other products:
Car Power Supply, Compact Null Modem Connector

Available from: Clove Technology www.clove-tech.co.uk +44 (0)1202 302796

PSIOlogic www.psiologic.com +49 6051 9655 0

Web: www.poduk.com
email: info@poduk.com
fax: ++44 1279 417637

For everything from your weekly shopping,
to your daily todo list...

Quiklist by balchie

Download Fully Working 14 Day Trial from
www.go.to/balchie

d@ta select

www.dataselect.co.uk

Introducing the new Ericsson MC218 Palmtop.....

Works instantly with your Ericsson GSM phone.
Comes with a free DI27 infra-red hardware modem.
It has full E-mail, fax, SMS and Internet capability.
Uses EPOC operating system with unique Ericsson applications for phone settings and Phonebook.
Calendar, contacts, PC synchronisation and mobile Internet (WAP browser) capabilities.

For more information on the MC218 and other Ericsson Mobile Data Products call

08702 420 420

(quoting reference PT1)

Make yourself heard.

ERICSSON

Opportunities for teaching part-time with the Open University

The Open University will be recruiting Associate Lecturers to tutor a new course

T171: You, your computer and the Net: learning and living in the information age

The course runs from February to October each year, with a second presentation from May to January. Applicants should have:

- enthusiasm for introducing adult students to the opportunities provided by computing and the Internet – and preferably some teaching experience
- a first degree – the subject need not be IT or computing related but you will need to be able to demonstrate current use of the Internet, either in a professional capacity, or as part of your everyday personal life.
- experience in the use of e-mail and computer mediated conferencing as an aid to collaborative working
- a sound grasp of current issues about how IT and computing might affect our social and working lives
- be based in the UK, as a limited number of face-to-face sessions will be involved

Associate Lecturers could expect to work about 7 hours per week on a flexible basis. Payment is based on the size of the group allocated, time spent teaching on-line and assignments marked. Earnings based on a group of 20 students would be in the region of £1500 per year.

Open University students are all adults who are studying part-time. They tend to be enthusiastic, hard-working and committed. Some will have experience of computing and others will be complete beginners.

For more information about the Open University visit our web site at http://www.open.ac.uk/ for information on T171 visit http://t171.open.ac.uk/pres/

To request an application pack to become an associate lecturer:

- e-mail your request to tut-wh@open.ac.uk quoting reference XWEB99 or
- telephone 01908 652453, quoting the same reference.

Please allow 10 working days for delivery. The closing date for applications is 4th January 2000.

Disabled applicants whose skills and experience meet the job requirements will be interviewed. The application pack is available in large print and on audio cassette. Hearing impaired applicants can enquire on (01908) 654901 (minicom answerphone).

We actively promote equal opportunities in education and employment and welcome applications from all sections of the community.

Palm-Tec – *the best palmtop case in the world or your money back*

- Award winning design – custom moulded from rigid, impact absorbing ABS plastic
- Hand-stitched covered foam lining
- Cutaways give in-situ access to pointer, mains and PC leads
- Four rubber feet prevent slipping on a desktop
- Two CF disks and a spare backup battery can be stored inside the case
- Belt attachable using the Palm-Tec Cordura® holster (sold separately)
- Available for the Psion, Ericsson MC218 and Palm V
- Tested in some of the harshest environments on earth (see www.palmtec.com)
- Never argue money back guarantee – if you don't like this case we'll refund all your money

COMING SOON!
Palm-Tec Revo cases

Palm-Tec

Tel: +44 (0)2476 465723 Fax: +44 (0)2476 470740
E-mail: sales@palmtec.com
Web Site: www.palmtec.com
Address: Palm-Tec Ltd, Midas Building, Torrington Avenue, Tile Hill, Coventry CV4 9AH

Also available see our web site or ask us for details

- ***The Palm-Tec Energy Solution*** - replace 600 alkaline batteries with this Nickel Metal Hydride charger (comes with two batteries included)
- ***The Palm-Tec Memory Solution*** - expand your palmtop's memory and back up your vital data
- ***The Palm-Tec Travel Modem*** - send and receive faxes and emails and browse the web with the world's smallest 56KBS modem

RMR Software

Distributors of Psion Shareware programs since 1994

Shareware programs for

EPOC - Psion S5/5mx, Revo, S7/netBook, Geofox-One, Ericsson MC2
and Psion Series 3mx/3c/3a and Sie

Financial

Personal Accounts Suite
EPOC S3mx/c/a Siena S3 £20 (US$30)

Investment Tracker
EPOC S3mx/c/a Siena £10 (US$15)

Fuel Consumption Monitor
EPOC S3mx/c/a Siena £10 (US$15)

Company Car Mileage Manager
EPOC £10 (US$15)

Home Inventory
EPOC S3mx/c/a Siena £10 (US$15)

File Management

Zip Compression & Archive
EPOC S3mx/c/a Siena £15 (US$25)

File Manager
EPOC £15 (US$25)

Games

Solitaire Patience
EPOC £10 (US$15)

Golf Patience
EPOC £10 (US$15)

Montana Patience
EPOC £10 (US$15)

Sokoban Logic Puzzles
EPOC £10 (US$15)

deVender Arcade Game
EPOC £10 (US$15)

Fruit Mania
EPOC £7 (US$10)

Crossword Puzzle Player
EPOC £10 (US$15)

Reverse Logic Game
EPOC £10 (US$15)

Personal/Time Managemen

Extended ToDo Manager
EPOC S3mx/c/a £10 (US$15)

Leave / Vacation Manager
EPOC £10 (US$15)

Contact Manager
EPOC £20 (US$32)

Agenda Plus - Month View
EPOC £12 (US$20)

Interne

News Reader
EPOC £15 (US$25)

FTP Client
EPOC £15 (US$25)

Utilities

Note Taker / Jotter
EPOC £10 (US$15)

Utilities & Conversions
EPOC £10 (US$15)

Diet, Weight & Exercise Monitor
EPOC £10 (US$15)

Sound Converter and Player
EPOC £12 (US$20)

Autotext Clipboard & Text Macro
EPOC £10 (US$15)

Tester - Revision & Study Aid
EPOC £10 (US$15)

Text Viewer & Hex Editor
EPOC Freeware

Graphics

Drawing and Art Package
EPOC £12 (US$20)

Copies of all programs can be downloaded from our website for evaluation, or send a 3.5" disk & stamped addressed envelope, specifying the platform required.

http://www.rmrsoft.com/
Email : sales@rmrsoft.com

Payment of the registration fee unlocks the full data capabilities. Many EPOC programs also available in French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Italian, Norwegian & Czech.

RMR Software (Dept
c/o 46 Mortimer Roa
Kempston, Bedfo
MK42 8RE Englan

RMR Softwar
c/o 6000 Natick Cou
Burke, VA 2201
US

Go32.com

Go32.com is taking the EPOC world by storm

Go32.com offers in-depth information about its software titles for download. Plus news, product reviews, quality editorial, competitions, promotions, and information about Symbian's EPOC technology...

It's not surprising that Go32 has become THE RESOURCE FOR ALL THINGS EPOC.

An online store, with a whole lot more...

"Go32 - Wow! You people really understand EPOC and what we customers want!"

Look out for our Christmas Specials!

"I'll be spreading the word to my gadget friends with Psions so they all visit this excellent site."

"Well done for at last having put together a resource for EPOC enthusiats which really covers the topics they need."

www.go32.com

partnered with symbian

Next issue...

Planned for issue 27:

- Long-term appraisals of the netBook and Series 7
- The new Psion Travel Modem in depth
- Life on the move. Essential tips for the mobile palmtop computer user
- Revo fever - a lineup of new software and accessories for the smallest Psion palmtop
- A roundup of EPOC file managers
- The final part of our Java feature
- Working for a living - the sportsperson
- Living with Palmtop Money
- Connecting your Psion to an Acorn computer
- Sinclair Spectrum emulation on the Series 5
- The best Series 3 software of all time...
- Working with Jotter
- OPL for beginners - part 6
- A guide to *all* Psion palmtops, past and present
- Palmtop Software's new Portfolio Manager

Plus all our regular features!

Palmtop Publications

S L SYSTEMSLINK TWO LTD

"The Case Place"

CLASSIC CASES FOR YOUR HAND-HELD

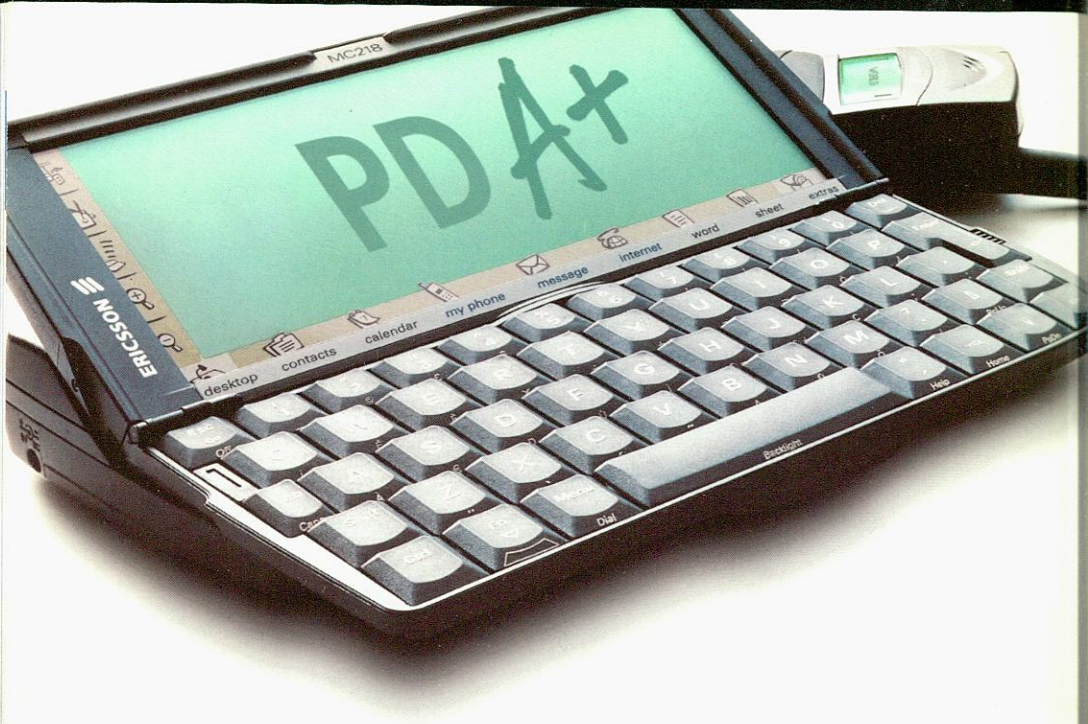
- *Value for money*
- *Special Offers*
- *Monthly reviews*
- *Student discounts*
- *And a friendly sales team!*

The Systemslink range of leather cases are made from top quality hides. Our cases have been carefully designed to ensure that they are light, functional and attractive.

We supply cases for a wide range of hand-helds. For the full collection of fine leather cases visit www.systemslink.co.uk or for alternative cases visit www.thecaseplace.co.uk

Call now for our latest brochure !

SYSTEMSLINK TWO LTD
NB HOUSE, STILEBROOK RD
OLNEY, BUCKS. MK46 5EA
TEL +44 01234 711220
FAX +44 01234 240256
email: sales@systemslink.co.uk
http://www.systemslink.co.uk
http://www.thecaseplace.co.uk



The new Ericsson MC218

Top marks to the Ericsson MC218 PDA (Personal Digital Assistant). It has everything you'd expect from a PDA. And a whole lot more that you wouldn't. As well as standard functions – such as diary, contacts, HTML web browser, and synchronisation with your PC – the MC218 comes with a host of other, truly unique features.

A WAP enabled internet browser (the world's first), which allows access to web content at a much quicker rate.

A 'Postcard' function which enables you to combine digital photographs with text documents and sketches, before e-mailing them on to friends or colleagues.

Ericsson 'My Phone' software that enables you to drag and drop information from phone to MC218 or from MC218 to phone. You can change settings, edit your phonebook, even make calls, straight from the MC218.

All for just **£479.99** (inc. VAT and UK mainland delivery). Includes a DI27 infrared modem, Ericsson 'My Pocket' software and a stylish carry case, in total worth £200.

For more information, or to purchase the MC218, call:

Data Select on 08702 420420

West One Technology on 02072 552550

Alternatively, access our website at **www.ericsson.co.uk/UK/mc218** for a full demonstration or to buy on-line.

Make yourself heard.

ERICSSON